REPORT RESUMES

ED 020 028 RC 000 335

A STUDY OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA.

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OKLAHOMA STATE EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION

PUB DATE JUL 65
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.50 HC-$3.48 85P.

DESCRIPTORS- *AGRICULTURAL LABORERS, AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS, CHILD LABOR, ENGLISH (SECOND LANGUAGE), ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGEMENT, EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGEMENT, *FARMERS, INTERVIEWS, LAND USE, MIGRANT ADULT EDUCATION, SPANISH AMERICANS, MIGRANT CHILDREN, *MIGRANT EMPLOYMENT, MIGRANT HEALTH SERVICES, MIGRANT HOUSING, MIGRANT WELFARE SERVICES, *MIGRANTS, MIGRATION PATTERNS, MIGRANT PROBLEMS, MEXICAN AMERICANS, QUESTIONNAIRES, *SPANISH SPEAKING, TEXAS, SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA,

A STUDY OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN THE 5 SOUTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA COUNTIES OF GREER, HARMON, JACKSON, KIOWA, AND TILLMAN WAS CONDUCTED IN 1964 BY THE OKLAHOMA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE. APPROXIMATELY 15,000 AGRICULTURAL MIGRANTS COME INTO THE AREA EACH YEAR. THE SURVEY FOUND THAT THESE PEOPLE WERE PREDOMINATELY SPANISH-SPEAKING FROM TEXAS, EARNED LESS THAN $1,000 PER FAMILY PER YEAR, HAD A MEDIAN AGE OF 13.7 YEARS, AND EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN SPECIAL TRAINING. OF THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS SURVEYED, 80 PERCENT EMPLOYED MIGRATORY LABOR DESPITE INCREASED MECHANIZATION. MOST GROWERS DEPENDED UPON THE COTTON GINS TO FURNISH HOUSING FOR WORKERS. LITTLE CORRELATION WAS FOUND BETWEEN AGES OF MIGRANT CHILDREN AND GRADES IN SCHOOL, DUE TO FAMILY MOVEMENTS AND VARYING SCHOOL VACATION PRACTICES. VERY FEW HEALTH SERVICES WERE AVAILABLE TO MIGRANTS SURVEYED AND MOST WELFARE PROGRAMS HAD RESIDENCE STIPULATIONS. THE OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE INDICATED THAT GROWERS AND GINNERS EXPECTED A DECLINE IN THE NEED FOR MIGRANT LABOR, THUS NECESSITATING CHANGES IN METHODS OF LIVELIHOOD ON THE PART OF MOST MIGRANTS. (SF)

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A Study of
MIGRANT WORKERS
in Southwest Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION
OKLAHOMA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
RESEARCH AND PLANNING DIVISION
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

RC 000335

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A Study of
MIGRANT WORKERS
in Southwest Oklahoma

This study was prepared by the Labor Market Information Section under the direction of Robert E. Turner. Survey data and other field information were obtained by Roy Ward, Raymond Melot and Harlan Pontious. Milton W. Tinney, Labor Market Analyst, compiled the data and wrote the narrative.

July 1965

OKLAHOMA EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION
OKLAHOMA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
RESEARCH AND PLANNING DIVISION
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INTRODUCTION

Early in 1964, the Oklahoma State Employment Service initiated a study of migrant agricultural workers in five southwestern Oklahoma counties. The counties selected were Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Kiowa and Tillman.

It was the Employment Service's understanding through various sources that the four to six months annual trek to this section of the State by as many as 15,000 migrants created social, economic, education, health and welfare problems of some magnitude. Primarily, these migrants who travel as family units are Spanish-speaking persons who originate in South Central Texas and the Rio Grande Valley. Moreover, the Employment Service learned that an undetermined number of these families had, in recent years, begun to settle in this area.

The five southwest counties in this report were selected because it was believed that here was the area where the largest concentration of migrants might be found. Furthermore, the manpower requirements for the production of cotton and the anticipated earnings were considered to be the prime motivation for most migrants engaged in farm labor. This is Oklahoma's leading cotton producing area. Jackson County, alone, is recognized as the State's biggest cotton producing area. (See Appendix Table I) Also, this southwestern area contains Oklahoma's largest concentration of irrigated farm acreage.

The cotton crop traditionally has required a great deal of hand labor. Despite the inroads of mechanization, the demand for hand labor in Southwest Oklahoma can still become acute, especially in the early part of the harvest.

At the onset of this project, questionnaires were developed to elicit specific information concerning the migrant situation. Types of questions were pre-determined by advance consultation with the staff of the Employment Service office in Altus. They had first-hand knowledge of the situation as a result of many years experience in the farm labor program. Furthermore, other source materials were studied.

Three experienced Employment Service interviewers, one a farm-placement specialist from Altus, were selected to gather the various data and comments needed. These men were headquartered in Altus and from this focal point, traveled the five selected counties.

At first, the team contacted farmers and cotton gins in the area. A ten percent sample of farm operators enumerated by the U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1959, was selected as a base. This type of survey was not intended to supplement or duplicate an agricultural census. Thus, interviewers were instructed to contact the larger farm operators and to emphasize visits to cotton growers. In order to avoid duplication of interviews with farmers and gins, each contact was pin-pointed with a marker on five large-scale county maps, which included section lines and other detail. The purpose was to determine the type of farm operation, extent of past, present and future labor requirements, influence of mechanization and irrigation and other changes affecting migrant farm labor.

All cotton gins were contacted in view of their extensive experience in such areas as providing labor for growers and migrant housing. Next, many types of organizations, including religious, public welfare and health agencies, state-local government officials, banks, hospitals and other interested persons were asked to supply pertinent information and comments.

Finally, interviews were held with the migrant workers. The primary objective of these contacts was to obtain as much information as possible from the migrants regarding such items as age, family status, educational attainment, origin, work history, migratory patterns, and income.

The Employment Service was fully aware some problems would arise in obtaining the necessary data due to the language barrier and the reportedly low educational level among the migrants. Thus, every effort was made to win support of the project and to obtain favorable publicity in the area.

Without the acceptance and approval of the plans, for example, by the Southwest Oklahoma Migrant Ministry (SWOMM), the local Bishop's Committee (Catholic) for the Spanish Speaking, and interested Protestant churches, the study may not have been possible. Through these organizations many migrants as well as permanently settled Spanish-American colonies were made aware of the project.

The Employment Service interviewers received excellent cooperation from the migrants. In nearly every case, they were able to converse to some extent with the interviewee in English or were fortunate enough to have a respondent's relative or friend act as an interpreter. It should also be pointed out that such questions as income and weeks of work, for instance, were answered largely from memory as few migrants kept written records.

We wish to express appreciation for the excellent cooperation received from the many people interested in this project. They include among others: individuals of the news media; religious leaders; doctors, dentists and other medical authorities; school officials; health and welfare directors; other Federal, State, County and local officials; and banking and financial executives. We are especially grateful for the assistance given by the cotton gin management and the many farmers scattered throughout the five counties. Finally, appreciation is certainly due the migrants for their sincere interest in this research project.

SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA

The five Oklahoma counties selected for this study lie in the extreme southwest corner of the State bounded on the south and west by Texas. This area comprises some 3,842 square miles of plains broken by the Wichita Mountain Range which runs in a northwesterly direction across Kiowa County toward Granite, in Greer County. The range, about 60 miles long and 20 to 30 miles wide, is largely comprised of granite rock, often in peaks, rough and sharp in appearance. Between Greer and Kiowa Counties, along the North Fork of the Red River, and within this range is the 6,575 acre Lake Altus, built for irrigation, municipal and industrial water supply and flood control.

This area of the State is characteristically low on rainfall and warmer than many other parts of Oklahoma. 1/ It is drained chiefly by the Red River and its tributaries which include the North Fork of the Red River that flows southward dividing Greer and Jackson Counties on the west and Kiowa and Tillman Counties on the east. Elevation here ranges downward from 1,608 and 1,615 feet in Greer and Harmon Counties, respectively, to lows of 1,389 and 1,304 in Jackson County and Tillman. The elevation of Kiowa County falls within the range, at 1,547 feet.

1/ For example, long-term, 1931-1960 mean average precipitation is as follows: Altus, 24.49"; Hobart, 25.13"; Hollis, 23.20"; Frederick, 26.83"; Mangum, 23.50" and long-term mean average temperature: Altus, 63.1°F; Frederick, 64.0°F; Hobart, 61.2°F; Hollis, 63.0°F. Source: U.S. Weather Bureau

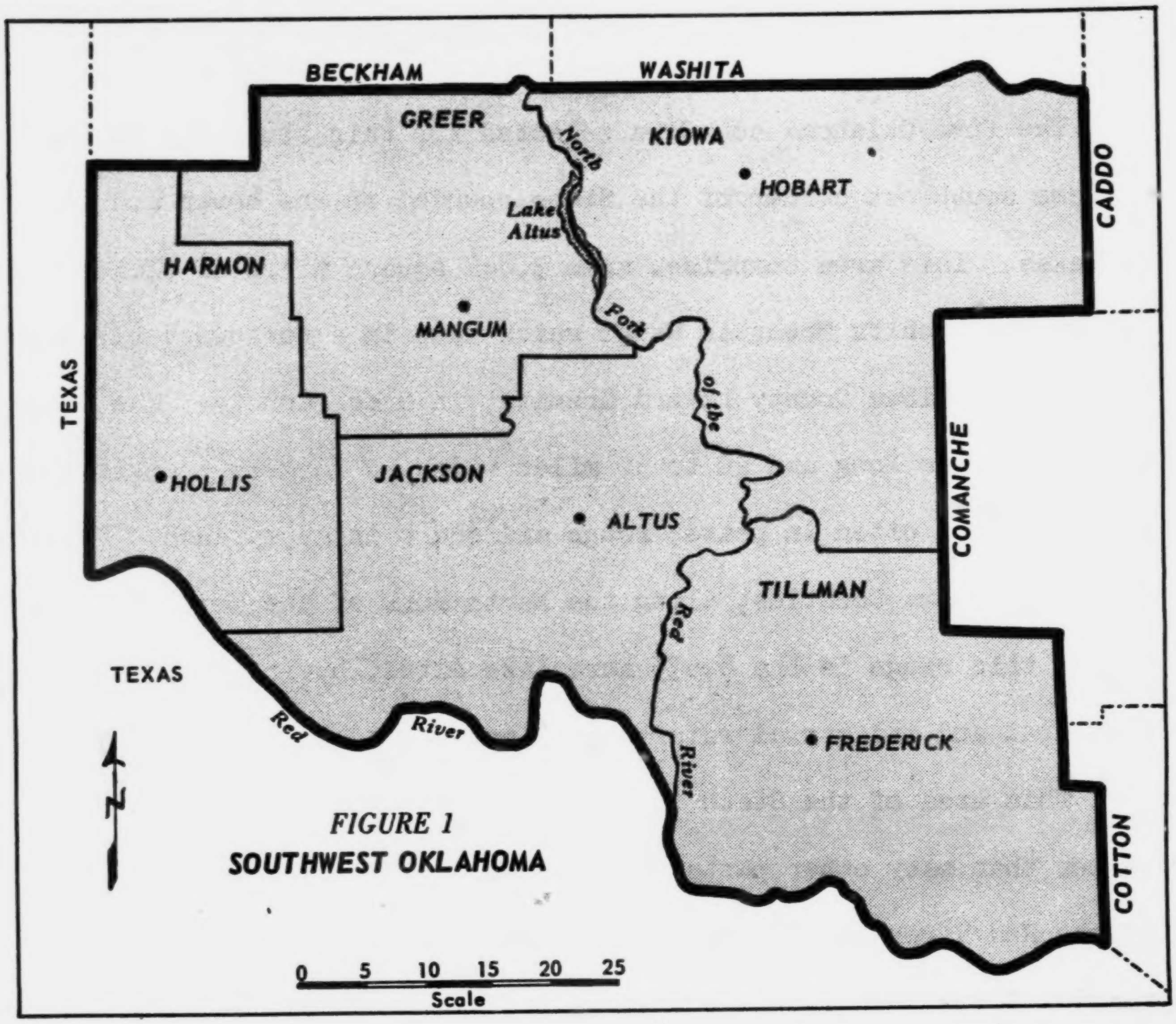
BECKHAM
WASHITA
GREER
KIOWA
HOBART
CADDO
North Fork of the Red River
Lake Altus
HARMON
MANGUM
TEXAS
JACKSON
HOLLIS
ALTUS
COMANCHE
TILLMAN
TEXAS
Red River
FREDERICK
N
COTTON
0 5 10 15 20 25
Scale

FIGURE 1
SOUTHWEST OKLAHOMA

According to the 1960 U.S. Census, there were some 73,944 people living in these five counties. Like many primarily agricultural areas this grouping of counties experienced a population loss between 1950 and 1960. Individually however, Jackson County recorded an increase, reflecting the reactivation of the Altus Air Force Base. This county, with 29,736 persons in 1960, counted a gain of 9,654, or 48.1 percent over the decade. The other four counties declined moderately during this ten-year period.

Jackson, the most populous county, had a density of 38.1 per square mile in 1960. On the other hand, Harmon, the least populated, had 5,852 inhabitants, or 11.0 per square mile. The largest county by area is Kiowa, where some 14,825 residents occupied 1,032 square miles. Table 1 illustrates the population, land area and density.

TABLE 1
POPULATION AND AREA 1/

County	Population 1960	Population 1950	Population Percent Change	1960 Land Area (Sq. Mi.)	Density (Pop. per Sq. Mi.)
Southwest Oklahoma	73,944	76,434	- 3.3	3,842	19.2
Greer	8,877	11,749	-24.4	637	13.9
Harmon	5,852	8,079	-27.6	532	11.0
Jackson	29,736	20,082	+48.1	780	38.1
Kiowa	14,825	18,926	-21.7	1,032	14.4
Tillman	14,654	17,598	-16.7	861	17.0

1/ *U.S. Census of Population*, 1960, Oklahoma PC(1)-38A, Table 6

Long before the arrival of the white man, this part of the State was used mainly as a hunting ground by the Plains Indians -- Kiowa, Comanche, Wichita -- then living in Western Oklahoma.

About 1860, old Greer County was organized by the State of Texas. This huge area, present-day Greer, Harmon, Jackson, and the south part of Beckham, Counties, was located between the North Fork of the Red River and the 100° meridian. During the 1870's and the 1880's, vast herds of cattle grazed here while thousands of head were driven to market along the Western Trail which stretched across the eastern part of the present-day Jackson and Greer Counties toward Dodge City, Kansas. About 1884-85, white homesteaders from Texas began to settle in

Greer, with Mangum as their county seat. A dispute eventually arose over possession of this area, and it was finally resolved in 1896 when a U.S. Supreme Court decision awarded the 1,500,000 acres of land to then Oklahoma Territory.

The land east of the North Fork of the Red River which included what is now Kiowa and Tillman Counties remained as part of the Comanche-Kiowa Indian Reservation until 1901. During that year, surplus lands on this reservation were opened to settlement by white men. Even so, a large part of Tillman was set aside for stock range purposes and leased by the Indians to cattlemen for grazing purposes. Perhaps the best known of these reserves was the "Big Pasture" in the southern part of Tillman (then included in Comanche County). This reserve was maintained until opened in 1906 by public auction. Soon afterward, the vast cattle business with its roaming herds of longhorns began to disappear.

With the coming of the railroads in the 1890's, settlers arrived in increasing numbers and began to cultivate the land in corn, wheat and cotton. There was no "run" for homesteads in Old Greer County, as in other parts of this State, instead it was populated more gradually. By the first years of the Twentieth Century, along with the opening of the Kiowa-Comanche lands, the area was converted from a once dominant ranching country to general farming. As early as 1897, two hundred bales of cotton were ginned at Altus. At the time of Statehood, 1907, cotton was Oklahoma's leading cash crop and the southwest area ranked as one of its important producers.

The advent of the automobile, the building of roads, and the introduction of improved machinery for plowing, seeding and harvesting, all contributed to the early growth of this region. These factors were conducive to large scale farming operations which were ideally suited to this section of Oklahoma.

During World War I, demand and prices for grain and cotton rose extensively, making farming more profitable. But, many farmers overextended themselves during the period, buying machinery and additional acreage at inflated prices. When the war ended, farm prices declined and a distressed situation existed in many rural areas during the 1920's. Conditions eventually improved until the Great Depression began in 1929. The ill effects of this situation were compounded by extremely dry years in the mid-thirties culminating in dustbowl conditions. These factors combined to bring about a steep decline in farm income and the eventual exodus of many persons from this area.

During the dustbowl days soil conservation practices were instituted. In the late 1940's, for example, the W. C. Austin Project, the State's first large irrigation system, was built and the Altus Dam and Reservoir were completed. These improvements helped farming conditions considerably. The coming of World War II, with its resultant labor shortage brought about further changes. The most important of these being the necessity of farmers to rely more and more on machinery. Subsequently, in the 1950's, irrigated acreage increased and has continued as a popular farming development.

In addition to the aforementioned developments, construction of missile sites surrounding the Altus Air Force Base contributed greatly to the build-up of the local economy during the early 1960's. Jackson County and Altus, in particular, benefited from an expanding population and noted the effect of greater buying power.

THE MIGRANT WORKER

The Migrant Comes to Southwest Oklahoma

Approximately 15,000 agriculture migrants come into Southwest Oklahoma each year as a part of an estimated 500,000 or more 1/ domestic migratory farm workers in the United States. These persons, who move into Jackson and other counties of this region, are predominately Spanish-speaking citizens who generally originate in Texas. They should not be confused with "braceros" who were contract Mexican nationals brought into this country to supplement the domestic farm labor force. 2/

The migrants, traveling as families, must go where they believe work may be found. Word of mouth apparently is the most accepted and common method of learning about jobs in Southwest Oklahoma. Sometimes crew leaders are responsible for locating work and frequently past experience is a determining factor. More often however, it is a long-distance telephone call or letter that causes an influx of migrants.

The Employment Service Survey included interviews with 376 Spanish-Americans, mostly men who were family heads. These individuals, hereafter referred to as respondents or family units, represented a total population of 2,332 persons. (See Appendix Table II) The group

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1/ The Community Meets the Migrant Worker, Bul. 221, U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1960, P.l.

2/ Arkansas and Texas, for example, used Mexican nationals. However, Public Law 78, the "bracero" program, was discontinued December 31, 1964.

was nearly equally divided between males and females with males having the slight majority.

Forty-eight percent of the population surveyed were in Jackson County. Tillman County had the next sizable group of persons represented, followed by Harmon, Greer and Kiowa Counties.

Many migrants who arrive in this area are handicapped by a limited -- often not more than the fourth grade -- education and lack of any skill except farm laborer. Frequently, there is a language problem, as some cannot speak English.

An average migrant family probably earns no more than $1,000 per year, far below $3,000 now commonly called the "poverty level". This low income of the migrant has been caused, in part, by irregular work weeks, possibly 26 weeks a year, and often long periods without any employment. These persons are not subject to many benefits industrial workers may receive such as minimum wage laws or unemployment compensation. Furthermore, they may not always be covered under Social Security 3/ and have no labor union affiliation.

When the migrant comes into the area, he brings his problems with him. Since migrants usually travel as families, with an average of six or seven children in each group, housing must be provided and children cared for or sent to school. As a result, the migrant has brought many health, welfare, educational and other social problems to the communities of Southwest Oklahoma.

3/ According to 1956 amendment, a farm worker is covered by Social Security if he is paid $150 in cash from any one employer, or if he worked 20 or more days during the year on a time rather than a piece-rate basis.

Migrants Apparently Came Earliest to Tillman County

The Employment Service asked the migrant workers when they first came to Southwest Oklahoma. The survey showed that the earliest median year of arrival for any of the migrants was 1956 for Tillman County, while the latest was 1961 in Greer County. The median in Jackson, where nearly half the respondents were interviewed, was 1959. Many of the migrants or former migrants decided to settle in Jackson County in the early 1950's. A few of the permanently settled persons in Tillman, for example, were native-born Oklahomans and some came as children in the 1920's and 1930's. One man said that he had lived in Tillman since 1917. Medians for other counties were 1959 in Harmon and 1960 in Kiowa.

Most Migrants Originated in Texas

It was found that 85 percent of all migrants said they came from Texas prior to arriving in Southwest Oklahoma.

Findings showed that most migrants came from areas in Texas having substantial Spanish-American, or Mexican-American populations. For example, some 25 percent of the persons sampled, traditionally worked or lived within a 50-mile radius of Corpus Christi, Texas. They followed cotton, vegetable crops and other farming in that South Texas area before migrating north. No less than 150,000 Spanish-Americans lived in that area according to 1960 Census reports. [4]

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[4] U.S. Census of Population, 1960, "Persons of Spanish Surnames", Vol. II, PC(2)-1B, Table 15, Washington D.C., 1963

Another sizable segment, almost 20 percent, reported they previously worked or lived in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. They came from an area having more than 250,000 Spanish-speaking residents. While in the Valley, they followed citrus fruit, mixed vegetables and cotton near Edinburg, McAllen, Harlingen or Brownsville.

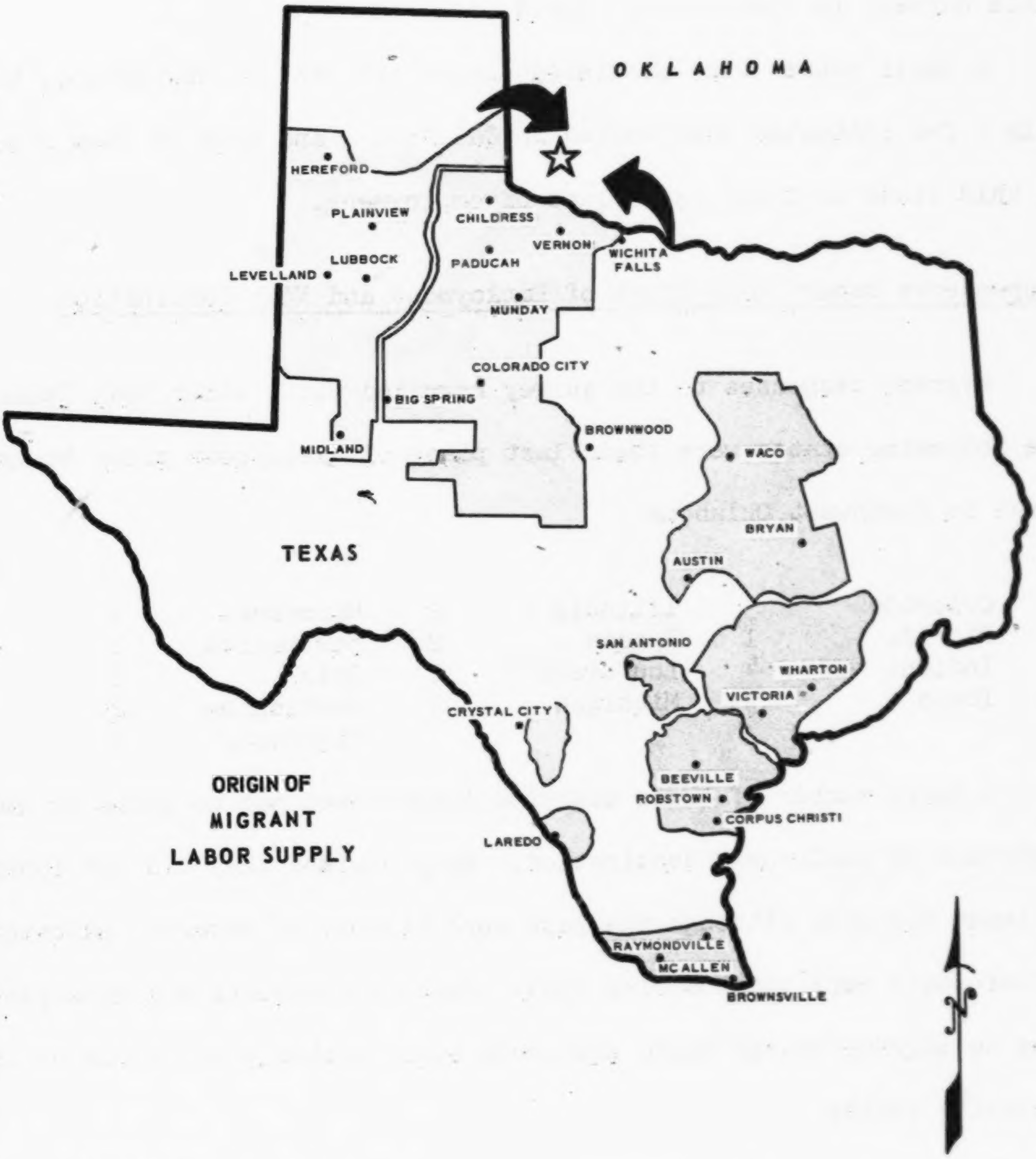
Approximately ten percent originated within a 50 mile vicinity of San Antonio and Austin. Still another ten percent or more followed cotton principally on West Texas farms around Lubbock, Big Spring or Munday. A small group, about five percent, of the families came from Hereford, Childress, and other towns in the Texas Panhandle. (See Figure 2)

The remainder of the migrants were from areas scattered throughout Texas; for example, Bryan and Waco in the Central part; Victoria and Port Lavaca in the South; Laredo and Crystal City in the Upper Rio Grande region; and a few from as far north as Wichita Falls and Gainesville. Significantly, none came from as far west as El Paso, and only one family previously lived in East Texas.

Some Migrants Went North for Crops Prior to Arrival Here

Not all the migrants came to Oklahoma directly from Texas. Just over ten percent of the Spanish-speaking population who migrated here came from other parts of the Nation. For instance, some came from Washington and Oregon where they picked fruit, while others reported they came from Idaho after completing the potato crop. Still others had been in Nebraska for sugar beets, and Colorado, working in sugar beets and potatoes.

FIGURE 2


OKLAHOMA
HEREFORD
PLAINVIEW
LUBBOCK
LEVELLAND
CHILDRESS
PADUCAH
VERNON
WICHITA FALLS
MUNDAY
COLORADO CITY
BIG SPRING
MIDLAND
BROWNWOOD
WACO
BRYAN
AUSTIN
TEXAS
SAN ANTONIO
WHARTON
VICTORIA
CRYSTAL CITY
BEEVILLE
ROBSTOWN
CORPUS CHRISTI
LAREDO
RAYMONDVILLE
MC ALLEN
BROWNSVILLE
ORIGIN OF MIGRANT LABOR SUPPLY
N

Adapted from:
U.S. Department of Labor Map

Many came from Minnesota, sugar beets, and Wisconsin, cucumbers. In addition, some migrated from the Great Lakes States, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio, after working in cherries, sugar beets, tomatoes, onions, etc. A few reported they traveled from the vegetable harvest in Alabama and Florida.

A small number were scattered across the West to New Mexico, but only a few indicated they worked in California and none of them reported this state as their last place of employment.

Respondents Report Last State of Employment and Next Destination

Migrant responses to the survey revealed that, other than Texas, the following states were their last place of employment prior to arrival in Southwest Oklahoma:

Colorado	3	Illinois	2	Minnesota	4
Florida	1	Kansas	2	New Mexico	1
Indiana	4	Louisiana	1	Ohio	1
Idaho	3	Michigan	2	Washington	2
				Wisconsin	3

A large number of those migrants interviewed had no plans or were uncertain of their next destination. Many claimed they did not intend to leave the area although the past work history of several indicated out-of-state employment during 1963. Those respondents who were planning to migrate stated their next move would probably be to one of the following states:

Colorado	17	Montana	1	Ohio	1
Indiana	1	Minnesota	1	South Dakota	1
Idaho	1	Nebraska	10	Texas	24
Michigan	4	North Dakota	1	Wyoming	2

Migrants Explain Why They Settle in this Area

Generally, persons settling in this area said that job opportunities and pay were better than in their place of origin, such as the Rio Grande Valley and other parts of Texas. Many of those who settled in the five-county area liked the climate, thought local people more friendly, and felt they were better accepted in the communities where they now lived. Others inferred that discrimination in labor surplus areas of Texas was a factor; while some felt that competition with the Mexican nationals, "wet-backs" included, was a motivating reason for settling in this area. Many families who lived in this region continued to migrate north, but still used Frederick, Altus or other Southwest Oklahoma communities as a home base.

Survey Finds More than Half the Migrants 14 Years Old or Less

Generally speaking, the 2,332 persons surveyed were found to be a youthful group. The median age was 13.7 years for the total, while the median was higher, 13.9 years, for males, and lower, 13.5, for females.

It should be noted that more than 19 percent were pre-school youngsters, under 5 years old, while some 35 percent were between the ages of 5 and 14 years. At the opposite end of the range, older people, those 65 years and over, represented less than one percent. As a matter of fact, all persons 40 years and up comprised only about 12 percent of the total. (See Table 2)

TABLE 2
AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEYED MIGRANT POPULATION

Age and Sex	Total	COUNTY Greer	Harmon	Jackson	Kiowa	Tillman
TOTAL, ALL AGES	2,332	191	395	1,120	123	503
Under 5 years	451	35	66	232	33	85
5 to 9 years	431	38	72	191	28	102
10 to 14 years	384	34	59	183	19	89
15 to 19 years	290	16	43	156	14	61
20 to 24 years	143	10	30	69	6	28
25 to 29 years	112	8	20	57	5	22
30 to 34 years	101	10	12	46	8	25
35 to 39 years	99	7	17	51	2	22
40 to 44 years	104	11	16	48	3	26
45 to 49 years	72	12	11	34	1	14
50 to 54 years	42	6	9	15	3	9
55 to 59 years	23	1	3	10	0	9
60 to 64 years	16	0	2	11	0	3
65 and over	17	2	3	5	0	7
Not reported	47	1	32	12	1	1
Median Age	13.7	13.3	15.0	13.7	10.1	13.6
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION, ALL AGES	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under 5 years	19.3	18.3	16.7	20.7	26.8	16.9
5 to 9 years	18.5	19.9	18.2	17.1	22.8	20.3
10 to 14 years	16.5	17.8	14.9	16.3	15.4	17.7
15 to 19 years	12.4	8.4	10.9	13.9	11.4	12.1
20 to 29 years	10.9	9.4	12.7	11.2	8.9	9.9
30 to 39 years	8.6	8.9	7.3	8.7	8.1	9.3
40 to 49 years	7.6	12.1	6.9	7.4	3.4	8.0
50 to 59 years	2.8	3.7	3.0	2.2	2.4	3.6
60 to 64 years	0.7	0.0	0.5	1.0	0.0	0.6
65 and over	0.7	1.0	0.8	0.4	0.0	1.4
Not reported	2.0	0.5	8.1	1.1	0.8	0.2

TABLE 2 (Continued)
AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEYED MIGRANT POPULATION

		COUNTY				
Age and Sex	Total	Greer	Harmon	Jackson	Kiowa	Tillman
MALE, ALL AGES	1,189	95	216	559	62	257
Under 5 years	216	13	34	107	18	44
5 to 9 years	226	21	43	92	18	52
10 to 14 years	194	14	32	100	6	42
15 to 19 years	149	9	22	76	6	36
20 to 24 years	68	6	19	30	3	10
25 to 29 years	50	5	7	27	1	10
30 to 34 years	51	6	7	25	3	10
35 to 39 years	47	3	9	21	1	13
40 to 44 years	55	6	9	24	3	13
45 to 49 years	36	6	6	19	0	5
50 to 54 years	28	5	5	12	2	4
55 to 59 years	18	0	2	7	0	9
60 to 64 years	10	0	2	7	0	1
65 and over	15	1	2	5	0	7
Not reported	26	0	17	7	1	1
Median Age	13.9	14.8	14.8	14.3	8.6	13.9
FEMALE, ALL AGES	1,143	96	179	561	61	246
Under 5 years	235	22	32	125	15	41
5 to 9 years	205	17	29	99	10	50
10 to 14 years	190	20	27	83	13	47
15 to 19 years	141	7	21	80	8	25
20 to 24 years	75	4	11	39	3	18
25 to 29 years	62	3	13	30	4	12
30 to 34 years	50	4	5	21	5	15
35 to 39 years	52	4	8	30	1	9
40 to 44 years	49	5	7	24	0	13
45 to 49 years	36	6	5	15	1	9
50 to 54 years	14	1	4	3	1	5
55 to 59 years	5	1	1	3	0	0
60 to 64 years	6	0	0	4	0	2
65 and over	2	1	1	0	0	0
Not reported	21	1	15	5	0	0
Median Age	13.5	12.3	15.4	13.4	12.1	13.4

Despite Low Literacy and Educational Level, Interviews Conducted Without Extreme Difficulty

Although language differences were considered a handicap, Employment Service interviewers did not experience extreme difficulty in this regard. Most of the 376 respondents spoke enough English to assist in completion of a questionnaire. Literacy was generally low, however, as only 38 percent of the respondents could read and write English. And, significantly, no more than 49 percent could read and write Spanish. It was further found that the educational attainment of the respondents -- 3.6 years -- ranged from 3.3 median school years in Tillman County to 4.0 in Kiowa County. (See Appendix Table II) Detailed educational information is discussed in another section of this report.

Migrants Express Interest in Special Training

When questioned about their interest in taking any special training to better themselves, 79 percent of the respondents answered in the affirmative. Many of them seemed aware of their educational and experience limitations and readily expressed interest in training. Nevertheless, it was observed that a vast number had "no idea" in what they were interested. Some expressed interest for their children but felt their own age, generally those past 40, precluded such an endeavor. Also, some believed their inability to read or write and lack of experience, other than farm work, would make such an effort "hopeless". Men who expressed interest in training or re-training wanted to learn such trades as plumbing, carpentry, mechanics, farm mechanics, welding,

TABLE 3
MIGRANTS INTEREST IN RECEIVING SPECIALIZED TRAINING

		County				
Subject	Total	Greer	Harmon	Jackson	Kiowa	Tillman
Agriculture	31	4	16	11	..	..
General Agriculture	1	..	..	1	..	..
Farm Mechanic	28	4	16	8	..	..
Farm Equipment	1	..	..	1	..	..
Tractor Operator	1	..	..	1	..	..
Skilled - Semiskilled	115	12	22	63	5	13
Auto Mechanic	5	..	2	2	..	1
Auto Body Repair & Mechanics	3	..	..	2	1	..
Carpenter	9	2	..	6	..	1
Carpenter & Painter	2	..	..	2	..	..
Compress Machine Operator	1	..	..	1	..	..
Construction Trades	8	1	1	6	..	..
Concrete Finisher	1	..	..	..	1	..
Electrician	2	..	..	2	..	..
Furniture Refinisher	1	..	..	1	..	..
Factory Work	1	1	..		..	..
Heavy Equip. Oper. & Welding	1	..	..	1	..	..
Heavy Equipment Operator	7	1	6	..	..	..
Heavy Equp. Oper. & Mechanic	1	..	1	..	..	..
Leather Work	1	..	..	1	..	..
Leather Work & Furniture	1	..	..	..	..	1
Mechanic & Welding	4	..	1	3	..	..
Mechanic & Carpenter	1	..	..	1	..	..
Mechanic & Reading & Writing	1	..	..	1	..	..
Mechanic, Welding & Painting	1	..	..	1	..	..
Mechanic & Painter	1	1	..	..	..	..
Mechanics	46	4	8	22	3	9
Painter	1	..	..	1	..	..
Plumbing	1	..	..	..	..	1
Radio and T.V. Repair	1	..	..	1	..	..
Radio Operator	1	..	..	1	..	..
Watch Repair	1	..	..	1	..	..
Welder	12	2	3	7	..	..
Clerical-Sales	2	..	..	..	1	1
Dental Laboratory	1	..	..	..	1	..
Sales & Accounting	1	..	..	..	..	1

TABLE 3 (Continued)
MIGRANTS INTEREST IN RECEIVING SPECIALIZED TRAINING

		County				
Subject	Total	Greer	Harmon	Jackson	Kiowa	Tillman
Service	16	3	2	8	3	..
Beautician	1	..	..	..	1	..
Cafe & Hospital	1	..	..	1	..	..
Cook	1	..	..	..	1	..
Child Care	1	1	..	..	..	..
Housekeeping	1	..	..	1	..	..
Janitor	1	..	..	..	1	..
Kitchen Work	1	..	..	1	..	..
Nurse Aide	3	..	..	3	..	..
Nursing	4	2	1	1	..	..
Police Work	1	..	1	..	..	..
Waitress	1	..	..	1	..	..
Other	7	..	..	5	2	..
English Language	2	..	..	..	2	..
Reading and Writing	5	..	..	5	..	..
Undecided and No Preference	124	5	14	58	6	41
Not Interested	78	10	15	30	..	23
TOTAL	373	34	69	175	17	78

or construction trades. Women expressed interest in waitress, kitchen helper, cooking, nurse aide, housekeeping and related occupations. Both men and women felt they needed to learn the basic "R's", reading, writing and arithmetic. (See Table 3)

Median Family Earnings for Migrants was $1,000

According to findings by the National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor, hired farm workers are among the most economically disadvantaged in this country. The national average annual wage for men and women employed at farm work for more than 25 days in 1957 was only $892 including $154 non-farm earnings. Seasonality of farm work and crop fluctuations mean there is usually work for only about one-half the year. 5/

The median family earnings for Spanish-Americans interviewed in the five southwest counties was found to be $1,000 in 1963. It should be noted earnings reported included some non-farm wages. Findings did show that earnings in Harmon County were higher, $1,750, than the other four counties, but the variance was attributed to a greater number of weeks worked. A larger proportion of the family heads reported they worked year-around; for example, some engaged in wheat and alfalfa activities. (See Table 4)

TABLE 4
NUMBER OF WEEKS WORKED AND ANNUAL FAMILY EARNINGS OF MIGRANTS

	MIGRANT WORKERS		
County	Median Number of Weeks Worked 1963	Median Annual Family Earnings 1963	1962
Southwest Area	26	$1,000	$1,000
Greer	26	1,200	1,200
Harmon	30	1,750	1,500
Jackson	24	1,000	1,000
Kiowa	24	1,000	950
Tillman	24	1,000	1,000

5/ Report on Farm Labor, Public Hearings of the National Advisory Committee on Farm Labor, Washington D.C., February 5 and 6, 1959. pp. 36-37

According to this survey annual earnings reported for 1963 were scattered over a wide range. They began with $100.00 for a man who apparently worked only a few days in cotton during the year and ranged upward to $5,460 for one family in Jackson County. The latter was an exception rather than the rule -- very few migrant families earned $5,000 or more in the year. The respondent with the top income had lived in Oklahoma since 1959. He and his family migrated to Colorado and Wisconsin in the spring, then returned to this area for the cotton harvest. To reach this income level, the respondent and his five children each worked from 29 to 30 weeks in 1963.

Earnings data were usually based upon memory. Therefore, they are subject to error, for instance, a tendency to forget minor or irregular sources of income.

In many cases, the median weeks reported by respondents shown in Table 4 were not complete weeks. Often they were irregular, sometimes only a few days, due to weather and crop conditions. Nevertheless, the weeks reported were for different weeks in the year in which the respondents worked.

Although the census was taken under different circumstances and the year reported is earlier, 1959, census data for family earnings in the respective five counties is shown in Table 5 as a matter of information.

TABLE 5
MEDIAN INCOME FOR ALL FAMILIES, PERCENT WITH INCOME UNDER $3,000, AND MEDIAN FARM FAMILY INCOME - 1959 1/

County	ALL FAMILIES Median Income	 Percent with Income Under $3,000	Farm Family Median Income
Greer	$3,358	44.4	$3,412
Harmon	3,693	40.4	4,384
Jackson	4,120	33.5	2,787
Kiowa	3,658	41.2	3,558
Tillman	3,330	45.4	2,878
STATE OF OKLAHOMA	4,620	31.0	3,361

1/ U.S. Census of Population, 1960, Oklahoma PC(1)-38C, Tables 36,65,93.

Some Migrants Deposit Earnings; Others Borrow for Cars

What about migrants who have begun to settle in this area? Are some becoming financially solvent despite a low median income?

Two banks located in Greer and Harmon Counties reported they had approximately 12 to 15 Spanish-speaking customers whose accounts averaged $50 to $100. These banks also made perhaps a dozen loans to Spanish-Americans for small amounts to purchase automobiles.

In Jackson County, with the larger population, some banks said they, too, had a few depositors who were Spanish-American. Approximately 10 had accounts averaging $300, while the maximum was $1,500. Some loans, usually up to $300, were made on automobiles. One bank reported they had 50 loans with such persons, or less than one percent of their loan business. The maximum of these loans, for car and furniture, was reportedly $2,500.

Two banks sampled in Kiowa and Tillman Counties together had about 20 Spanish-American depositors with checking accounts averaging about $100. These banks also made a few loans, up to $600 on automobiles.

One finance company in Jackson County estimated that out of approximately 4,000 accounts, between 300 and 400 were Spanish-Americans. These loans ranged from $200 to $400, largely on cars.

FARM CHARACTERISTICS AND LABOR TRENDS

Classification of Farms

Employment Service interviewers contacted 508 farm operators during the early months of 1964. This number was approximately ten percent of those reported by the 1959 agricultural census. More than one-half, 55.5 percent, of the farmers in the five-county area classified their farms as "general" and over one-third, 34.8 percent, primarily as "cotton". Designations of farm type, unlike the agricultural census, were made by the operators themselves.

TABLE 6
PRIMARY TYPE OF SURVEYED FARM

		Area				
Type	Total	Greer	Harmon	Jackson	Kiowa	Tillman
Cotton	177	18	40	60	21	38
Wheat	43	0	2	13	13	15
Beef	2	0	1	0	1	0
Dairy	1	0	0	1	0	0
General	282	73	57	82	35	35
Other	3	0	0	1	2	0
Total	508	91	100	157	72	88

One-fourth of Surveyed Farm Land in Jackson County

Of the total number of farmers contacted during the survey, some 463 of them operating in 1963 had also farmed in this area during the previous five and ten-year periods. The remaining operators had either begun farming after 1953 or were at one time operating outside the five counties surveyed. They were excluded in order to portray a comparative picture of the growth in farm size. These data, although meaningful, might have shown a slightly different pattern if information could have been obtained from farm operators active in 1953 or 1953 and 1958 but not in 1963.

Total land equaled 299,153 acres on the farms sampled, with 25.1 percent located in Jackson County. Other proportions ranged from 21.1 percent in Tillman to 16.6 in Greer. These long-term farmers told interviewers that cropland amounted to 230,029 acres, or 76.9 percent of their land in farms. (See Table 7)

Average Size of Farm

Farms surveyed had an over-all average of 646.1 acres in 1963 per operator who farmed over the ten-year span. This figure reflected an increase over an average size of 607.1 acres five years earlier. In addition, the more recent amount was considerably above the 545.0 acres reported for those farms in 1953. Of the surveyed total in 1963, Kiowa County operators farmed on the largest scale in the five-county area, averaging 856.1 acres, with Jackson County the smallest, 543.9 acres. All individual counties, of course, reflected increased farm size over ten years previous.

Cropland farmed also grew simultaneously with land in farms. The 1963 average size was computed at 496.8 acres for tracts included in the survey for the five counties, up from 425.2 acres in 1953. Tillman County growers reported the largest acreage, 611.8, while the smallest cropland amount averaged 424.2 acres in Greer County.

TABLE 7
LAND IN FARMS, CROPLAND AND IRRIGATED ACRES
1953, 1958 and 1963

Item	Total	County				
		Greer	Harmon	Jackson	Kiowa	Tillman
Land in Farms						
Number Operators Reporting 1/	463	83	89	138	68	85
Acres 1963	299,153	49,730	53,015	75,064	58,218	63,126
Average per Operator	646.1	599.2	595.7	543.9	856.1	742.7
Acres 1958	281,076	48,190	49,354	71,829	54,224	57,479
Average per Operator	607.1	580.6	554.5	520.5	797.4	676.2
Acres 1953	252,334	46,363	45,977	64,457	49,886	45,651
Average per Operator	545.0	558.6	516.6	467.1	733.6	537.1
Land in Cropland						
Number Operators Reporting 1/	463	83	89	138	68	85
Acres 1963	230,029	35,206	41,434	61,804	39,586	51,999
Average per Operator	496.8	424.2	465.6	447.9	582.1	611.8
Acres 1958	217,078	33,908	39.963	60,269	36,050	46,888
Average per Operator	468.8	408.5	449.0	436.7	530.1	551.6
Acres 1953	196,891	32,581	37,496	55,406	33,312	38,096
Average per Operator	425.2	392.5	421.3	401.5	489.9	448.2

TABLE 7 (Continued)
LAND IN FARMS, CROPLAND AND IRRIGATED ACRES
1953, 1958 and 1963

Item	Total	County Greer	 Harmon	 Jackson	 Kiowa	 Tillman
Land in Irrigation						
Number Operators Reporting 2/	242	43	55	89	19	36
Acres 1963	44,074	4,834	10,462	21,589	2,086	5,103
Average per Operator	182.1	112.4	190.2	242.6	109.8	141.8
Number Operators Reporting 2/	225	39	51	84	17	34
Acres 1958	39,646	4,126	9,662	19,883	1,722	4,253
Average per Operator	176.2	105.8	189.4	236.7	101.3	125.1
Number Operators Reporting 2/	169	30	37	72	11	19
Acres 1953	28,347	3,433	6,982	14,859	1,010	2,063
Average per Operator	167.7	114.4	188.7	206.4	91.8	108.6

1/ Number reporting is a matched sample and refers only to respondents who were farming in all three periods, 1963, 1958 and 1953.

2/ Number reporting includes the same operators referred to in total land in farms and cropland. However, only those reporting irrigated acres are shown for each period.

Irrigated Acreage Shows Increase

Data are also shown for land in irrigation. This important farming practice has been on the increase in recent years. The first significant development took place near Altus when the W. C. Austin Project put 47,260 acres of land under irrigation during 1946-50. Figures shown in Table 7 on irrigation relate to the same farms discussed in previous paragraphs regarding land in farms and cropland. However, only those units with irrigated tracts are included on this table.

The 44,074 total acreage represents the amount of irrigation on farms so engaged in 1963. If comparisons are made with 1953, it may be noted this type acreage has increased from 28,347 acres. Combined, acres in irrigation during 1963 was 19.2 percent of the cropland total.

The average number of acres under irrigation was 182.1 in 1963, an increase over 176.2 five years earlier and 167.7 in 1953. This trend, although not as marked as the general expansion in average farm and cropland size, is quite significant. In addition, there was a gain in the number of farmers who had adopted the irrigation practice in the past ten years. Specifically, some 242 farms, more than half the total sampled, were irrigated in 1963.

Jackson led the other southwestern counties in the ratio of irrigated to cropland acres in 1963, with 35 percent. In addition to having the greatest amount of acreage irrigated in this area, the county's land in irrigation averaged 242.6 acres. On the other hand, the least proportion, approximately 5 percent, was in Kiowa, where the average irrigated land stood at 109.8 acres per farm. Generally, except in

Greer, the average irrigated acreage reflected an increase compared to ten years earlier. Table 7 gives detailed statistics as reported by the long-term farm operators.

Despite Mechanization Many Farmers Use Migrant Labor

Of the 508 farm operators interviewed in the five-county area, it was found that over 80 percent employed migratory labor. At the same time, it was learned that most cotton growers also used machinery to some extent to harvest their crops.

Employment Service reports on the cotton harvest in this multi-county area for 1963 indicated that 35.2 percent of the crop was hand-harvested. Nevertheless, there was a distinct difference in the extent of mechanization between counties. Jackson, where the largest number of migrants worked, harvested about half its cotton crop by hand, while in Tillman probably no more than ten percent was obtained in this manner. In that county most acreage was harvested by stripping machine.

Cotton harvesting methods in recent years for this five-county area were estimated as follows:

Year	Percent by Hand	Stripping Machine	Picking Machine
1963	35.2	51.1	13.7
1962	31.5	58.0	10.5
1961	38.4	49.9	11.7

Farmers Report Migrant Worker Decline

Some 13,678 migrant workers were employed during 1963 by 368 of the surveyed operators who were farming ten years before and used this type labor anytime during one or more of the three years in question. This migrant total was off from 16,175 in 1958 and 16,520 ten years ago. Jackson County, where cotton production was the greatest in the five-county area, reported the largest number of migrants employed in each of the respective years. Other important users of this type labor were growers in Harmon and Greer Counties. On the other hand, less than 1,500 were utilized in Kiowa, while the least number, under 1,000, were employed in Tillman County. (See Table 8)

The use of migratory farm labor reflected divergent trends among the separate counties. For instance, Tillman farmers reported 917 migrants in 1963, a sharp contrast to 2,131 ten years earlier. Over the same span, the number of operators using this type labor dropped markedly. In both Harmon and Jackson, requirements for migrants declined significantly, whereas, in 1963 the employer count was not appreciably different. Conversely, slightly fewer migrants were needed in Greer County during 1963 than 1953 despite an increase in growers utilizing such persons. On the other hand, in Kiowa County, the count of migrants rose 40 percent simultaneously with a gain in the number of employers using their services. The increase in operators using migrants in Greer and Kiowa stemmed from a trend toward wider usage of this type labor to meet manpower requirements once met by local sources.

There was a considerable decline over the ten-year period in the average number of migrants employed per operator. The total hired in 1963 averaged 37.2 per farmer as compared to 42.8 five years earlier and 46.0 ten years ago. A drop was also indicated in the average number required by operators in individual counties.

TABLE 8
USE OF MIGRANT FARM LABOR

Item	Total	County Greer	Harmon	Jackson	Kiowa	Tillman
TOTAL FARM OPERATORS SURVEYED	508	91	100	157	72	88
No. of Operators who Used Migrant Labor 1/	414	82	87	128	47	70
MIGRANT FARM LABORERS EMPLOYED BY OPERATORS						
1963 Migrant Total	13,678	3,225	3,636	4,481	1,419	917
Operators Using Migrants	368	81	85	120	39	43
Average Number Migrants	37.2	39.8	42.8	37.3	36.4	21.3
1958 Migrant Total	16,175	3,340	4,286	5,607	1,460	1,482
Operators Using Migrants	378	71	86	123	37	61
Average Number Migrants	42.8	47.0	49.8	45.6	39.5	24.3
1953 Migrant Total	16,520	3,285	4,715	5,373	1,016	2,131
Operators Using Migrants	359	62	87	124	25	70
Average Number Migrants	46.0	53.0	54.2	43.3	40.6	30.4
NUMBER REPORTING CHANGE IN LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT IN RECENT YEARS FOR MIGRANT LABOR 2/	329	79	73	98	40	38
NUMBER OPERATORS REPORTING THEY USED WORKERS YEAR TO YEAR 2/ ----- Used Many of Same	80	5	6	41	5	23
Used Few of Same	88	12	17	32	10	17
Used None of Same	233	72	71	60	26	4
NUMBER REPORTING THAT MIGRANT WORKERS WERE:						
Mostly Family Groups	367	86	85	117	39	40
Mostly Individuals	32	1	9	16	2	4

1/ Number who were operating a farm in both 1953 and 1963 and also had used migratory farm labor in one or more of the years 1953, 1958 or 1963.

2/ Individual items do not equal total operators who used migrant labor due to nonresponse.

The majority of the operators concurred that the length of employment for migrants was shorter in recent years. Primarily, the cotton season required less time due to machine harvesting. Also, growers were in general agreement that pre-harvest work has been reduced due to the use of pre-emergence chemical spray. Some operators commented that the cotton allotment system, which cut acreages, reduced the need for migrants.

While these developments were acting to curtail manpower needs the effects of other factors were less pronounced. For example, irrigated cotton, such as grown in Jackson County, produces a greater yield per acre and requires more man-hours to prepare for harvest. This may not necessarily mean, however, any significant number of additional jobs for migrant labor as they are primarily used in chopping and boll pulling.

Number Mechanized Growers Doubles in Past Decade

Mechanization has sharply curtailed the use of hand labor according to 493 responding cotton growers. Statistically, the number of growers who used machinery to harvest their crops about tripled for the five-county area during the past decade. Furthermore, there was a sharp increase in all individual counties. (See Appendix Table III)

Some 215, or 44 percent of the cotton producers in the southwestern area reported they used machinery for all, or nearly all, their harvesting. The number who have switched to complete, or almost complete, mechanization about doubled in five years, and was nearly five times greater than ten years ago. In contrast, the number of farmers who did not use machinery for cotton harvesting was reported at 77, or 15.6 percent of the 1963 total.

The number using hand labor exclusively was off 55.7 percent from 174 operators in 1958, and down 75.2 percent from 311 ten years ago. Noteworthy, only four Tillman County farmers said they relied upon this method, which was a substantial drop from 1953. Simultaneously, Tillman had a sharp rise in the number of growers who used machinery, particularly those who almost, or did completely, depend upon machines. Furthermore, the survey showed that Tillman, with 66 farmers reporting 95-100 percent machine harvest in 1963, exceeded other individual counties in the number of growers who were, or almost, completely mechanized.

Machine Replaces 50 Workers

The replacement of hand labor by machinery for harvesting can perhaps best be illustrated with these examples:

> A hand boll puller can average 400 to 1,000 pounds of boll cotton per day. To produce one bale, 500 pounds of lint, it would require 4 to 5 persons, depending upon conditions. Boll pullers generally receive $1.75 per 100 pounds. There may be as many as 50 hands per crew, harvesting 12 bales daily.
>
> By comparison, a two-row cotton picking machine with a crew of two doing the same volume of work can replace the 50 boll pullers. Too, the machine can operate 7 days per week, while an average crew often stops work after 5½ days. The cost of the picker is, of course, a factor; they usually sell for $15,000 to $18,000 and operate best in tall, dense, high-producing cotton. During the 1963 season there were less than 100 one- and two-row machines in this area.

> A conventional cotton stripping machine, requiring a crew of three, on the other hand, is usually more popular where cotton plants are less than 30 inches tall and with yields averaging under one bale per acre. They cost about $1,700 and can harvest up to 1½ bales per hour, or 10 or more bales per day, depending upon weather and crop conditions. An improved two-row stripper appeared during the 1962 season. This model can harvest two bales or more per acre in dense and high-producing cotton. However, it costs twice as much as the conventional machine. All together, there were approximately 1,000 strippers in the area during the 1963 season.

Cotton Gins Supply Labor for Many Farmers

Another important source of information regarding the use of migrant workers in Southwest Oklahoma is the cotton gins. Most, some 47 out of 53, gins had personal contact with migrants during the cotton season and quite often served as a source of labor supply to the farmer in the community. Besides the usual ginning service rendered, they frequently refer workers to farms, and several gins even have "labor managers" whose job is to direct crew leaders or family heads to available work. (See Appendix Table IV)

Most gins in Greer, Harmon and Jackson Counties evidently did not enter the labor supply field until the mid-1950's. This practice apparently stemmed from competitive efforts to encourage the use of a particular gin by cotton growers. As may be noted elsewhere in this report, it also led to the gins' provision of migrant housing. In Tillman County, several gins reported they had been working with migrants as early as the 1920's when many temporary workers came from Eastern Oklahoma.

Jackson County gins, from where 2,975 migrants worked in 1963, accounted for the largest number of any of the five counties. The second ranked county in this regard was Harmon, with 1,350, followed by Tillman with 1,250 workers. (See Table 9)

Compared to five years ago, labor requirements as reflected by gin reports have greatly diminished. Over all, labor dropped to 6,825 for gins in 1963, down 41.3 percent from 11,625 reported in 1958.

The most pronounced change during this period was a substantial drop shown in Tillman County, where the number of migrants fell to 1,250 from 4,500, a reduction of 72.2 percent, in five years. Kiowa also reported a significant decline, especially around Gotebo and Mountain View, when the number employed fell to 650 in 1963 from 1,550 in 1958.

TABLE 9
NUMBER OF MIGRANTS SUPPLIED BY GINS

	Number Migrant Workers				
	Total			Percent Change	
County	1963	1958	1953	1958-63	1953-63
Total	6,825	11,625	INA	- 41.3	INA
Greer	600	425	0	41.2	*
Harmon	1,350	1,975	400	- 31.6	*
Jackson	2,975	3,175	INA	- 6.3	INA
Kiowa	650	1,550	1,800	- 58.1	- 63.9
Tillman	1,250	4,500	6,725	- 72.2	- 81.4

INA - Information not available. Some gins either did not report number of migrant workers for 1953 or were not rendering that service.

* - Over 200 percent increase

HOUSING CONDITIONS

This section of the report deals with migrant housing conditions as they existed during the first six months of 1964. Doubtless, they have changed somewhat as the result of legislation passed by the 1963 Oklahoma Legislature, that took effect in July 1964, after the field work for the study was completed.

Symbolic of cotton production in Southwest Oklahoma are the so-called "gin barracks", or migrant camps, often near the community's cotton gin. Generally, this typifies migrant housing in all counties west of the North Fork of the Red River.

Majority of Growers Depend upon Gin Housing

The Employment Service found in its survey of 53 gins in the area that nearly half of them furnished barracks-type housing, some 1,071 rooms, rent free, with most available all year and about one-half with utilities furnished year around. (See Appendix Table IV)

These barracks, commonly corrugated sheet iron row-type buildings, are normally divided into rooms, 12 feet by 12 feet, back-to-back, each with a single door and window. These quarters are normally illuminated by a dangling light bulb. At each end of the barracks is located an outside faucet, the camp's water supply. A short distance away are two outdoor privies. Piles of rubbish and trash around the building are not uncommon.

In addition to this type housing, many gins had "on-farm" or "town houses" totaling 122 units. These, too, were rent free and with utilities furnished. About one-third of these houses were available for occupancy all year.

Moreover, many farmers and growers in the various communities of the five counties also furnished housing for migrants. A few had barracks while some provided single type houses. Quite often migrants were housed in old abandoned, sometimes dilapidated farm houses that may often be seen in the rural areas. Of the 452 cotton growers who responded to the question, some 12 percent had housing available on their farms. The majority, or 60 percent, depended upon "gin housing". (See Table 10)

TABLE 10
TYPE HOUSING PROVIDED MIGRANT LABOR 1/

		County				
Type Housing	Total	Greer	Harmon	Jackson	Kiowa	Tillman
Gin	272	74	80	98	14	6 2/
Town	61	6	9	17	18	11
On-farm	56	9	10	21	9	7
Other	63	2	4	28	1	28
Total	452	91	103	164	42	52

1/ Data taken from 1964 survey as reported by farm operators.
2/ No gin housing in this County; workers resided in adjoining counties.

Ginners Comment on Housing Situation; Cite Cost Factor

Most operators of these gin barracks seemed concerned or were aware of the conditions that prevailed at the time of the Employment Service study. As one operator remarked, "...migrants create a sanitary problem at the gin housing...," and concluded, "...it will be necessary to keep migrants because a percentage of the cotton will have to be gathered by hand."

One gin manager, with 44 rooms, claimed that he may close them down because he "...is unable, financially, to provide proper housing facilities."

A ginner summarized the cost during 1963 of operating a 48-room unit, a building consisting of concrete floor and sheet iron walls and ceilings. The initial investment was $11,000. Month by month the utilities totaled $5,300 for the year and were:

January	$ 800	September	$ 600
February	500	October	800
July	400	November	1,000
August	400	December	800

During March, April, May and June, gas and electricity were turned off. Water, on the other hand, was available to occupants at all times. Approximately $880 per year was spent to clean the barracks and area. Another cost item was maintenance: material, $100 and labor $100. Items such as light bulbs, stoves and locks amounted to $200. Taxes were also another important cost factor.

Housing Situation Described

Of the five counties surveyed, Jackson's migrant housing situation has perhaps been the most widely publicized. A Roman Catholic weekly newspaper, the Oklahoma Courier, described migrant conditions in a series of three articles in late 1962. 1/ One article commented

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1/ Oklahoma Courier, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma on "...(the) ghastly conditions under which they (migrants) live ...." In a June 1964 article entitled "The Forgotton Citizens", Extension, a national Catholic magazine describes housing conditions. 2/ The author noted: "The entire family eats, sleeps and lives in this (one) room...," and in one of the barracks rooms, volunteers "found a mother with ten children, five of whom had been sick for two weeks."

The Jackson County Health Department, fully aware of migrant sanitation problems, wrote in their September 1963 report that there are an estimated"... 15 or 20 camps in use four to six months each year. Many of these camps have unsafe water supplies, improper sewage disposal systems, and the general sanitation needs considerable improvement.... Because of the nature of the migrant and his way of life a tremendous education program will have to be planned in the future." 3/

What did the migrant, himself, think of housing in this area? When asked that question, eight out of ten replied they considered it adequate. (See Appendix Table II) Such a sizable affirmative response was probably due to their association with previous housing or acceptance of poverty conditions that precluded anything better. For instance, a typical migrant had often lived in the "slum sections" of other communities or had stayed in temporary housing elsewhere which was no better than his present quarters.

2/ Extension Magazine, Chicago, Illinois

3/ Program for Public Health Service and Provision of Public Health Facilities, Jackson County, Oklahoma

State Legislature Enacts Migrant Housing Code

As mentioned previously, the Oklahoma State Legislature enacted a law regulating migrant labor camps, effective July 15, 1964. The Act, relating to the State Department of Health, created an advisory board, and defined a labor camp to include "living quarters for 15 or more... migrant persons, and occupied for more than three days...."

The Act requires the licensing of migrant labor camps and provides for the application, issuance, suspension and revocation of licenses. Furthermore, it authorizes the State Board of Health to issue rules and regulations for enforcement of the law. The camps are subject to inspection regarding minimum standards of construction, sanitation, equipment and operation. Penalties are provided for violations of this Act. Occupants of the camps themselves are subject to misdemeanor charges should they violate health and safety regulations.

The effectiveness of the new housing code cannot be ascertained at this date. In 1963, however, the Jackson County Health Department, with one sanitarian, admitted it "...will require additional personnel for the desired compliance." In addition to enforcement of migrant labor camp codes, the sanitarian must also enforce local ordinances and statutes relating to environmental sanitation. Because Jackson County has increased its population in the past decade, the work load, i.e., inspection of hotels, motels, school sanitation, etc., related to this type sanitation has increased 30 to 40 percent.

EDUCATION

Public Schools Report on Migrant Children's Enrollment

One of the many problems facing communities with numerous migrants is that of providing education for their children. Oklahoma has a compulsory school attendance law for children under 18 years of age and the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, amended in 1950, makes it illegal for children under 16 to be employed in agriculture while schools are in session.

State Employment Service representatives interviewed school officials in all five counties. In addition, they discussed education problems with the migrants.

Public schools reported that during the 1963-64 term there were 1,314 children of migrants, primarily those with Spanish surnames, enrolled in the various schools. No private or parochial schools were surveyed largely because very few, if any, migrants were reported as enrolled in those facilities. Furthermore, few such schools exist in the five-county area.

The survey indicated that Jackson County schools, with 504 Spanish-American children, had 38.4 percent of the total migrant enrollment. Harmon, with 23.5 and Tillman, with 18.7 percent, ranked second and third. Greer and Kiowa, for educational purposes, were the least affected by the impact of migrant children.

Comparing 1963-64 with 1962-63, there were 17 percent fewer migrant children in school. Most of this loss occurred in Jackson and Tillman Counties. (See Table 11) One influencing factor was that

TABLE 11
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT OF SPANISH-AMERICAN CHILDREN 1/

County	Children Enrolled Number	GRADE OF SCHOOL IN WHICH ENROLLED: Elementary School 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	High School 9	10	11	12
						1963-1964							
Southwest Area	1,314	297	216	195	162	152	92	86	55	43	8	5	3
Percent	100.0	22.6	16.4	14.8	12.3	11.6	7.0	6.6	4.2	3.3	0.6	0.4	0.2
Greer	116	30	20	13	16	7	9	11	10	0	0	0	0
Harmon	310	62	51	50	45	43	13	15	8	17	3	2	1
Jackson	504	122	80	73	49	57	52	33	18	17	2	0	1
Kiowa	138	27	25	25	12	7	7	14	9	7	2	2	1
Tillman	246	56	40	34	40	38	11	13	10	2	1	1	0
						1962-1963							
Southwest Area	1,583	390	282	230	184	156	116	83	63	44	26	5	4
Percent	100.0	24.7	17.8	14.5	11.6	9.9	7.3	5.2	4.0	2.8	1.6	0.3	0.3
Greer	164	31	28	14	19	20	17	12	16	2	2	2	1
Harmon	309	65	53	64	30	30	19	11	7	17	12	1	0
Jackson	695	212	131	94	74	50	49	39	22	14	8	1	1
Kiowa	123	21	22	14	14	12	12	7	8	8	2	1	2
Tillman	292	61	48	44	47	44	19	14	10	3	2	0	0

1/ As near as possible, only persons with Spanish surnames are included in this summary.

2/ This table was compiled from data obtained by a survey of all public schools in the area. Some few schools were omitted for which no distribution was available.

school enrollment figures did not include those children who may have registered after the survey. Data shown for 1961-62 were higher than for the subsequent school year suggesting a decline in the migrant work force.

Figures also revealed that 1961-62 was a peak enrollment period, reflecting an increase over 1957-58 and 1952-53. However, the enrollment figures may be greatly affected by cotton production, thus requiring more or less migrant agricultural workers, and it should be mentioned that 1961 was a good cotton year. Trends for ten years indicate that by 1962-63, Greer and Harmon Counties gained significantly in the number of migrant school children. In addition, an increase was observed in Jackson schools; but in Tillman, particularly, the count declined substantially over the ten-year period. That reduction was not surprising due to rapidly diminishing farm labor requirements thus reducing the need for migrant workers. (See Table 12).

TABLE 12
SUMMARY OF SCHOOL ENROLLMENT FOR SPANISH-AMERICAN CHILDREN 1/

	TOTAL BY YEAR 2/				
County	1963-64	1962-63	1961-62	1957-58	1952-53
Southwest Area	1,314	1,583	1,664	1,497	1,584
Greer	116	164	154	110	90
Harmon	310	309	291	245	147
Jackson	504	695	722	537	595
Kiowa	138	123	136	167	195
Tillman	246	292	361	438	557

1/ As near as possible, only persons with Spanish surnames are included in this summary.

2/ This table was compiled from data obtained by a survey of all public schools in the area. Some few schools were omitted for which no distribution was available.

More than one-half of the migrant children reported as enrolled in school in the southwest area were either in the 1st, 2nd or 3rd grades. No age breakout was requested of the schools, but comments from the various officials indicated that many were over age for the grade enrolled -- frequently by as much as 3 or 4 years.

It may be noted in the accompanying Table 11 that as the grade ascends to the high school level, the number and percentage enrolled declines steadily. Significantly, only four children in 1963-64, and three during the previous school year, were even enrolled in the senior year of high school in the five-county area. Figures also reveal that no more than 5 percent of those migrants, or persons with Spanish surnames, reached the high school level.

Age and Grade Show Little Correlation

Table 13 shows the highest grade attended by Spanish-Americans between 6 and 19 years of age regardless of whether they were currently enrolled or out of school. Generally, the data for children under 16 years reflected the number enrolled in school at the time of the survey. This was the legal minimum age for hired farm work during school hours. Some few, shown in the "none" column of Table 13, age 7 and over were not in school due to physical disability.

Of the 947 persons 6-19 years of age represented in the migrant study, one-half of the group who had attended school reached the fourth grade. Similar to reports received from school authorities, this data shows that as the grade of schooling progressed fewer Spanish-Americans

TABLE 13
HIGHEST YEAR OF SCHOOL ATTENDED BY SPANISH-AMERICANS, AGE 6 THROUGH 19 YEARS

Age and Sex	Number of Persons 2/			Highest School Year Attended											
				Elementary School								High School			
	Total	Percent	None	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4
Both Sexes															
Age 6-19	947	100.0	81	142	147	120	111	102	88	56	47	28	16	6	3
6 years	77	8.1	51	26		..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
7 years	72	7.6	10	53	9	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
8 years	90	9.5	6	39	37	8	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
9 years	82	8.7	2	14	40	20	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
10 years	80	8.4	2	5	31	28	10	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
11 years	76	8.0	1	1	13	21	21	17	2	..	..	..	..	..	..
12 years	71	7.5	1	..	9	13	20	16	12	..	..	..	..	..	..
13 years	76	8.0	1	..	3	10	15	19	14	11	3	..	..	..	..
14 years	69	7.3	1	..	3	5	13	17	11	10	9	..	..	..	..
15 years	58	6.1	..	..	..	6	9	7	17	7	7	5	..	..	..
16 years	64	6.8	..	1	1	3	6	8	10	10	11	7	6	1	..
17 years	48	5.1	2	..	1	2	4	7	6	7	6	7	4	2	..
18 years	38	4.0	2	1	..	2	3	4	9	5	4	4	3	1	..
19 years	46	4.9	2	2	..	2	4	3	7	6	7	5	3	2	3
Male															
Age 6-19	490	51.7	38	73	86	61	62	47	46	22	27	17	8	1	2
6 years	36	3.8	20	16	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
7 years	32	3.4	5	23	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
8 years	53	5.6	4	23	23	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

TABLE 13 (Continued)

Age and Sex	Number of Persons 2/			Highest School Year Attended											
				Elementary School								High School			
	Total	Percent	None	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4
9 years	46	4.9	2	7	26	10	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
10 years	45	4.8	1	4	18	13	6	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
11 years	39	4.1	1	..	5	14	11	7	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
12 years	34	3.6	..	..	5	7	13	3	6	..	..	..	..	..	..
13 years	36	3.8	1	..	3	6	4	11	9	1	1	..	..	..	..
14 years	33	3.5	..	..	1	2	10	6	4	7	3	..	..	..	..
15 years	29	3.1	..	..	..	..	7	3	10	3	4	2	..	..	..
16 years	33	3.5	..	..	..	2	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	..	..
17 years	32	3.4	2	..	1	..	2	6	4	4	5	5	2	1	..
18 years	18	1.9	1	..	..	2	3	2	4	..	4	2	..	..	..
19 years	24	2.5	1	..	..	2	1	2	4	2	5	4	1	..	2
Female															
Age 6-19	457	48.3	43	69	61	59	49	55	42	34	20	11	8	5	1
6 years	41	4.3	31	10	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
7 years	40	4.2	5	30	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
8 years	37	3.9	2	16	14	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
9 years	36	3.8	..	7	14	10	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
10 years	35	3.7	1	1	13	15	4	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
11 years	37	3.9	..	1	8	7	10	10	1	..	..	..	..	..	..
12 years	37	3.9	1	..	4	6	7	13	6	..	..	..	..	..	..
13 years	40	4.2	..	..	..	4	11	8	5	10	2	..	..	..	..
14 years	36	3.8	1	..	2	3	3	11	7	3	6	..	..	..	..
15 years	29	3.1	..	..	..	6	2	4	7	4	3	3	..	..	..
16 years	31	3.3	..	1	1	1	2	4	6	5	6	3	1	1	..
17 years	16	1.7	..	..	..	2	2	1	2	3	1	2	2	1	..
18 years	20	2.1	1	1	..	..	..	2	5	5	..	2	3	1	..
19 years	22	2.3	1	2	..	..	3	1	3	4	2	1	2	2	1

1/ Data taken from migrant worker survey early 1964 and includes only persons in households who primarily were dependents of respondents, except an individual's spouse.

2/ Variance in total on this and table 2 is largely due to non-response for some ages.

were found among those enrolled. Thus, those students reaching the third or fourth year high school accounted for less than one percent of the total.

Examples of how many children from a family may be enrolled in the same grade was noted in the study. All of the students for one family with 14 children, ranging from 3 years and up, were in the fifth grade or lower. It was discovered that five, ranging in age from 11 to 16 years, were in the third grade.

Crop Vacation Practices Vary Within Area; Thus Affecting Enrollment

Crop vacations frequently cause migrants to lose out on education. For example, migrant children may be out of school for one crop vacation in one place, then move on later to another area where a crop vacation is just beginning. School regulations pertaining to this occurrence were mixed among the several counties. At Frederick, in Tillman County, schools dropped the practice after the 1962-63 term. But in a rural area of Jackson County, school was suspended for four weeks during the cotton season, while in still another part of the same county, schools remained open during the harvest.

Educators Comment

School officials in the multi-county area frequently blamed parental attitudes for the minimum of education of their children. For example, one said, "Many of the parents are not interested, (they) send children because (they) are forced to. Naturally boys and girls are problems when behind (in grade), they are not interested in catching up; parents (are) not interested so the teacher has quite a problem."

To illustrate the poor educational attainment of migrants, one Tillman County superintendent recalled that he "hasn't seen more than two or three graduate in twenty years." An experienced educator in Greer County remarked the three students in his high school, tenth grade and up, were "the first migrant children who attended our high school." And, two Jackson County rural school officials, having between 100-150 migrant children enrolled, commented: "Very few get beyond the primary grades," or, "They quit when old enough to work."

A rural educator who had a large migrant enrollment at his school suggested Federal aid was needed, such as provided schools near large military bases. He said, "The school is hurt by the impact (of migrants) and needs Federal aid as Altus does for Air Force children." He explained, "We have to hire extra teachers, (while) some free meals are given as well as school supplies."

The superintendent of one municipal school system believed the migrant educational situation to be a national problem. He stated, "I think all of us recognize this is a national problem. Certainly it is not an isolated local problem, or one which is peculiar to the State of Oklahoma, and I am of the opinion, before too much can be accomplished in this area, it will have to be a joint effort of all the states of the United States."

While the difficulty of migrants purchasing school supplies and buying lunches was one problem, not all counties were in agreement that these should be furnished free of charge. In Tillman, for example, migrants with children became discouraged from coming to one community because of a policy of no free lunches or school supplies.

Irregular and poor attendance was one characteristic attached to migrants by nearly all school systems in the five counties. However, this was not the only problem facing some rural schools. Two or three schools in Greer and Harmon Counties were being forced to close their doors after the 1963-64 school term, brought on by lack of State Aid because of delining enrollment.

The school systems, according to the survey, face many obstacles in dealing with migrant children. One problem that was generally prevalent in the school systems was the language barrier which posed a difficulty in teaching. Most schools claimed that younger children, those in the primary grades, had difficulty with English, yet apparently few schools in Southwest Oklahoma had bi-lingual teachers to cope with the situation. To meet this problem, one town, Frederick, employed a special bi-lingual teacher for pre-school Spanish-American children during a six weeks special summer school.

Noteworthy, the playground was one area in which most schools agreed there was little or no problem. Officials of the various schools stated that migrant children were generally accepted and well treated by other youngsters.

Some Migrants Aware of Educational Handicap

Although it was recognized that one problem in the area of migrant education was the stimulation of parental interest, this was not always the case according to the migrants view. One family head at Altus stated that "...the migrant's problem is lack of opportunity to get education (as a child) while moving around the country with (his) family to (help) earn a living....". This man, who was permanently settled, had ten children ranging in age from two to twelve.

A crew leader agreed that Spanish-Americans are in "bad shape" and are getting little work and "need education and training for other work".

An Altus man, permanently settled in this area since 1949, self-educated and earning $4,000 annually from nonfarm work, told interviewers he quit migrating north some three years ago in order to keep his eight children in school. This may very well be the attitude of many who are attempting to settle in the area.

Still another Altus resident aspired for a better future for his 12 children, all in school. He hoped that they could get an education which he did not have and "learn a better occupation for a better living".

Another family, interested in education for their children, but with one 12 and a 14-year old dropout, said they were "too poor" to keep children in school and buy lunches, supplies and clothing. Findings of this study suggested that many of those persons interested in children's education simply couldn't meet the cost. Furthermore, teen-agers, especially, discover they cannot compete with other children of the same age, who may be further advanced in school, have better clothes and more financial stability. Eventually they become discouraged and drop out of school.

CHILD LABOR

The employment of children has long since become a thing of the past in American industry. Today, it is only in agriculture that this practice has continued to any extent. The U.S. Department of Labor believed that, "Children have long been and still are (1960) a substantial segment of the labor force that cultivates and harvests the crops." They cite statistics including the findings of Wage and Hour investigators. Of 4,389 children found illegally employed, in fiscal year 1959, during school hours on 1,749 farms; 17 percent were 9 years of age and under; 54 percent were 10 to 13 years of age; while 29 percent were 14 or 15 years old. Thirty-nine percent of all children were those of migrants. 1/

The Federal Wage and Hour Law specifically prohibits children under 16 years of age from working in agriculture during school hours. Oklahoma statutes specify that except for certain occupations, e.g., which are injurious to health or morals or especially hazardous to life and limb, there is no minimum age requirements for employment of children. 2/ Oklahoma has a compulsory education law that makes it unlawful for any child over 7 and under 18 years, unless he is prevented by mental or physical disability, not to attend school. To deter illegal job holding, an "employment certificate" or a "work permit" is required

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1/ The Community Meets the Migrant Worker, Bulletin 221, 1960, U.S. Dept. of Labor, pp 24-25

2/ State of Oklahoma Department of Labor, Women and Children in Industry, Pamphlet, 1964 by State laws for all employed minors under 18 years of age except those working in agriculture, domestic service or as newsboys.

Interviews were conducted with migrants in this area to determine the extent of child labor. Their comments relate to work done in other states as well as Oklahoma. One should be aware, though, that replies to questions of this nature may or may not have been biased, due to fear of consequences if a law was knowingly or wilfully violated. Despite such regulations many parents, because of economic need, depend upon their children's earnings.

More than one-fourth, 26.6 percent, of 783 Spanish-speaking children who were 6 through 16 years of age, apparently worked some portion of 1963. Conversely, family heads reported that about three-fourths of the children in the five-county area had no gainful employment. Some 40 percent of the working children entered the labor force 5-9 weeks, whether or not they attended school. Very few, 20, worked 20 or more weeks and only 4 of these reportedly were in the fields six months or longer. (See Table 14)

Of the younger children, only two boys, age 6-7, worked in agriculture, and this was less than 9 weeks. Two girls, age 8-9 years, were reported to have had employment during the year, but also less than 9 weeks. It was not until a child reached 12-13 years that a significant number were working. About one-half, 47.8 percent, of the boys that age helped their families in the fields while more than one-third, 35.5 percent, of the girls also worked. When children reached 14-15 years, the statistics showed that most of them had some employment for the year. At 16 years, nearly all, 96.4 percent, of the boys contributed to the family earnings whereas 78.1 percent of the girls that age were employed.

TABLE 14
NUMBER OF WEEKS WORKED BY SPANISH-AMERICAN CHILDREN, AGE 6 THROUGH 16 YEARS

	Number Weeks Worked							
Age and Sex	Total	None	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-25	26 & up
Both Sexes								
Age 6-16	783	575	49	84	48	7	16	4
6-7 years	150	148	1	1	..	..	..	..
8-9 years	168	161	4	3	..	..	..	..
10-11 years	159	142	4	11	2	..	..	..
12-13 years	145	85	22	23	9	1	5	..
14 years	54	17	6	18	8	1	2	2
15 years	47	14	6	14	9	2	2	..
16 years	60	8	6	14	20	3	7	2
Male								
Age 6-16	405	292	28	48	23	3	9	2
6-7 years	70	68	1	1	..	..	..	..
8-9 years	97	92	3	2	..	..	..	..
10-11 years	84	78	..	6	1	..	..	..
12-13 years	69	36	12	13	6	..	2	..
14 years	32	11	4	10	4	..	2	1
15 years	24	6	4	9	1	2	2	..
16 years	28	1	4	7	11	1	3	1
Female								
Age 6-16	378	283	21	36	25	4	7	2
6-7 years	80	80	..	..	..	..	..	..
8-9 years	71	69	1	1	..	..	..	..
10-11 years	74	64	4	5	1	..	..	..
12-13 years	76	49	10	10	3	1	3	..
14 years	22	6	2	8	4	1	..	1
15 years	23	8	2	5	8	..	..	..
16 years	32	7	2	7	9	2	4	1

HEALTH AND WELFARE

Three Counties Have Health Departments

Three southwest counties, Jackson, Kiowa and Tillman, had full-time health departments located within their boundaries. The remaining two, Greer and Harmon, had no such agencies but were not, of course, without public health supervision. In each, administration of state health codes is under the direction of a Superintendent of Health. Furthermore, County Boards of Health are appointed to oversee local health education needs. Employment Service representatives contacted officials in counties with local health departments.

The Kiowa County Health Department suggested that improved health practices and basic education of migrants would benefit their community. They also wanted immunization of migrant children to be required prior to enrollment. The public health nurse there provided services for some 25-30 Spanish-American families, or about 10-15 percent of their total patient load.

During 1963, some 200 Spanish-speaking persons were assisted in Tillman County. The local health department called attention to a rising incidence of tuberculosis for the year, especially among the Spanish-American settlement. They suggested some type of detection steps be taken and "required by the U.S. Public Health Service."

Of the three counties with health departments, Jackson has the largest population. In addition to the local residents, they estimate approximately 7,000 migrant farm laborers come to their area for about four to six months each year. The migrants are characterized as a group that had "...family solidarity which results in total family migration with subsequent poor housing and environment; financial insecurity resulting in delayed, thus ineffective medical care; (and a) high childhood mortality rate from preventable diseases. It appears," the department added, "the immunization status is below the level desired; that health education is greatly needed; that pre-natal and post-natal care should be made more available."

The local health department has regularly scheduled public health clinics. The clinic services include "well-baby", immunization, maternity and infant care, venereal disease program, follow-up of tuberculosis families, X-rays, medications as prescribed by personal physicians, individual counseling and group teaching.

Public health nursing services are provided in the clinics, homes, schools and among community groups. In addition, nurses teach home safety, nutrition and mental health. Follow-up home visits are also made.

Although many of their health programs have been active for some years, the Jackson County director commented: "Progress is very slow because of lack of education on the part of the migrant and the failure of too many people to care what happens...."

Medical Officials Comment

Physicians in the counties reportedly contributed considerable personal services and supplies to the Spanish-American population. The physicians in Tillman County were in agreement with health officials, and pointed out that the problem of tuberculosis, especially among the older residents, increased during 1963 and early 1964. This situation apparently did not appear as acute in other counties.

Physicians summed migrant problems and health needs as follows:

1) Epidemic diseases due to poor living conditions;
2) A need for a multi-county program for health education and immunization; and,
3) A program of health education relating to pre-natal care and small children.

Dentists in the five-county area reported generally their experience with migrants has been extraction of badly neglected teeth. They also noted a higher rate of pyorrhea among the Spanish-American people than the general population. No dental health program was apparently provided in connection with any health department. However, in Jackson County, long-range plans provide for this service if adequate funds and facilities become available.

Noteworthy, eye specialists contacted regarding this study said that very few eyeglasses were purchased by the Spanish-Americans because they read very little. Unless there was a severe case, the average eye difficulty never came to the doctors' attention. They did comment that women sought eyeglasses, more so than men, to help themselves in sewing. For members of its "Literacy Class", SWOMM reported they had a "revolving loan fund" available for those persons who needed glasses in order to progress in reading.

The Oklahoma General Hospital at Clinton, partly supported by state funds, handled nearly 1,000 charity cases during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1963. They attributed more than one-third of these cases to the Spanish-Americans, with 90 percent originating in the five southwest counties. At Clinton, also, Western Oklahoma Tuberculosis

Sanitorium provided care for eleven Spanish-Americans during 1963, a small part of their 155 "patient day average".

According to hospital observations, Spanish-American families often did not seek medical attention until it was too late, especially when they had no work or money. Both physicians and hospitals reported more than usual deaths in these delayed cases. Moreso, a greater personal effort was required in an attempt to render medical attention. They added the mortality rate was acute for children age 10 to 12 years who lived in barracks type housing and very poor shacks during the winter months.

New Migrant Health Service

According to information published in October 1964 by the State Health Department, a migrant labor project has been approved by the U.S. Public Health Service, "to furnish and supplement existing public health and medical care services to migrant labor families in Jackson, Harmon and Greer Counties. The goal of the project is to improve the over-all health status of the domestic agricultural migrant population which annually migrates into this tri-county area, by improving public health nursing services, including systematic screening and referral of migrants for health and medical care services. (The project is) also to improve the environmental sanitation in migrant camps, including housing."

State Programs for Public Assistance

Problems of welfare assistance to needy persons are continuous. It was learned during this study, however, that few migrants were eligible for the State's public assistance programs. This aid, provided by the Oklahoma Department of Public Welfare includes: (1) Aid to the Totally and Permanently Disabled; (2) Old-Age Assistance; (3) Aid to Dependent Children; (4) Aid to the Blind; and, (5) Crippled Children's Services.

The first four programs are financed by the Oklahoma sales tax and federal matching funds under the Social Security Act. All of these have residence stipulations, the minimum required includes one year immediately preceding the application for assistance. The Crippled Children's Service, a federal grant-in-aid program, does not have strict residential eligibility requirements. Under this service, hospitalization may be given to any child for a crippling condition or who may otherwise be handicapped.

Distribution of Surplus Food Commodities

Another State welfare service is aid to needy persons by the distribution of surplus food commodities. This program is administered in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which provides commodities under its price stabilization program. Emergency grants, based on need, may be made by the welfare director in each county. The actual distribution of surplus food itself is under the direction of county commissioners.

Two types of recipients are eligible for food: (1) "public assistance", i.e., persons eligible under Oklahoma's Public Welfare Program, and (2) "general" or "non-public assistance" certified on basis of need.

In Jackson County, for example, eligibility for general assistance is determined by monthly income at the time of or subsequent to application. Estimates there indicated that surplus commodities were given to more than 1,100 families, or over 3,900 persons, during January 1964. There were perhaps 175 Spanish-speaking families represented, or almost 1,000 persons. Noteworthy, about nine out of ten of these people were not eligible for public assistance. The Jackson County Welfare Department reported that in February 1964, 28 Spanish-speaking families representing 122 people had acquired residence and were receiving public assistance.

In Greer County, for May 1964, some 775 persons were public assistance cases, and 14 of these were Spanish-Americans. There were 995 general assistance recipients with 37 families or an estimated 175 Spanish-speaking persons.

Harmon County had about 480 cases in March 1964, of whom 85 were considered Spanish-Americans representing 480 persons, yet very few of those were public assistance cases. Furthermore, in 1963 there were seven Aid to Dependent Children cases and one for Aid to Disabled. There were none on record for State Old-Age Assistance or Aid to the Blind. Also, that year, 31 Crippled Children's Service applications were received.

Kiowa, with about 1,050 eligible for commodities in May 1964, had an estimated 250 Spanish-sepaking persons receiving surplus food, and again, only a small number on public assistance.

During May 1964 more than 3,600 persons received commodities in Tillman County including 850 Spanish-Americans. At that time, about 75 persons were on public assistance rolls.

As may be summarized from the foregoing material, migrants have normally been excluded from public assistance programs in Oklahoma due to residence requirements. Some of these persons are frequently stranded without money and work due to crop completion or bad weather and therefore faced with problems of bare subsistence. To partially alleviate this situation, however, surplus commodities have been provided.

Various Counties Contribute to the Needy

Jackson County contributed to needy migrants including Spanish-Americans during 1963. Besides spending $600 per month to distribute commodities, it paid transportation expenses for many persons to Oklahoma General Hospital at Clinton and the University of Oklahoma Medical Center in Oklahoma City. Outlays were also made for medical and burial purposes.

County Memorial Hospitals in Jackson, Harmon and Tillman were dependent on a $\frac{1}{4}$ mill levy for charity, thus they received limited financial assistance for care of indigent patients. The Jackson County Memorial Hospital reported that Spanish-Americans constituted 12 percent of their annual patient load while hospitals in Harmon and Tillman claimed 5 and 10 percent.

Greer and Kiowa Counties had no special tax levy for charity. But in each place, transportation costs were paid for a few needy to the Clinton or Oklahoma City hospitals, plus burial allotment.

Charitable Organizations Active in the Area

One of the most active groups interested in migrant welfare is the Southwest Oklahoma Migrant Ministry, Inc. (SWOMM), non-profit, and sponsored by the Oklahoma Council of Churches. SWOMM ministers to the physical, social, educational and religious needs of migrants and Spanish-speaking citizens in the five-county area. One of its important multi-service programs includes day-care services for children, operated in Jackson and Harmon Counties. The centers are financed through the State Welfare Department which provides a case-worker and consultant.

The Bishop's Committee (Catholic) for the Spanish Speaking is another of the active charitable organizations in the area, particularly Jackson County. They, in cooperation with other local agencies and organizations are concerned with the migrant problems. Their program is divided into four major groups: health, education, welfare and spiritual development. Welfare assistance is one of the most difficult problems faced by the Committee, but they feel that "much was accomplished during 1963...."

The Salvation Army at Altus is still another group rendering charitable service to migrants. They donated emergency food, clothing, and transportation. In addition, contributions of bedding and furniture were made. Overnight lodging and meals were provided some migrants in rooming houses, although many others were forced to live in and around their cars and trucks because housing was occupied.

An example of cooperative efforts in Jackson County occurred during the 1963 cotton season when the Bishop's Committee, through a SWCMM committee assignment, organized volunteer health teams to make weekly visits to all barracks housing. These teams, which included Air Force doctors and nurses (military physicians are not licensed to examine or treat patients off the Altus Air Force Base) advised on basic hygiene and general sanitation practices. The Committee sponsored demonstrations on child care, bottle sterilization and formula preparation.

OUTLOOK

Locally, Growers and Ginners Expect Worker Decline

The cotton harvest in Southwest Oklahoma normally begins in September, lasts through November or December and occasionally into January, depending upon weather conditions. Hand labor is generally used until the first "killing frost" when machines usually take over for completion. Pre-harvesting, such as hoeing and chopping, may date from mid-April through August.

According to cotton growers contacted, migrant labor demand will dwindle during the next five years. For instance, some 479 farmers predicted their harvesting methods to 1968 and 1973. It was felt, however, that information for the latter period was inconclusive due to the uncertain conditions and many variables that are characteristic of agriculture.

As pointed out, most farmers anticipate mechanization. By 1968, some 295 operators estimated they would utilize machinery almost exclusively, 95-100%, an increase over the 215 total in 1963. Those who do not plan added mechanization will drop to 54 from 77, a 29.9 percent reduction. (See Appendix Table III)

Cotton growers in Greer, Harmon and Jackson Counties apparently will be the chief users of hand labor in ensuing years. Significantly, none of the Tillman farmers and only eight in Kiowa plan to rely on hand labor in the future.

Gin operators in the five-county area were in agreement with farmers as to the future outlook for migrants. They reported 5,725 migrants working during 1963, but expected that less than half that number would be needed by 1968. Within ten years, or by 1973, ginners anticipate further reductions. By then, survey findings show that only 1,625 will be required.

Again, as in the growers' outlook, Jackson County will continue to be the biggest demand center for migrant workers. Next, in order of need, will be Harmon and Greer Counties. The sharpest reduction is anticipated in Tillman where labor required would drop to 225 in 1968 and to 100 by 1973, from the 1,250 employed in 1963. Kiowa ginners also predict sharp cutbacks. They anticipate a need for only 100 migrants in ten years as compared to 525 for the survey period. (See Table 15)

TABLE 15
NUMBER OF MIGRANTS NEEDED BY GINNERS IN 1968 AND 1973

	Number Migrant Workers				
	Total			Percent Change	
Area	1963 1/	1968	1973	1963-68	1963-73
TOTAL	5,725	2,625	1,625	- 54.1	- 71.6
Greer	600	375	350	- 37.5	- 41.7
Harmon	1,350	500	375	- 63.0	- 72.2
Jackson	2,000	1,325	700	- 33.8	- 65.0
Kiowa	525	200	100	- 61.9	- 81.0
Tillman	1,250	225	100	- 82.0	- 92.0

1/ Number workers reported for 1963 has been adjusted, and excludes those ginners totals for which no forecasts were made for periods 1968 and 1973. Consequently, figures in Tables 9 and 15 are not strictly comparable.

National Outlook and Legislation

Nationwide, there appears to be a continued trend toward mechanization and technological advancement in many crops which have traditionally required hand labor. Demand for the unskilled migrant will likely be on the decline, if reports from some states are an indication. On the other hand, some speculation continues to exist outside Oklahoma as to what effect discontinuance of Public Law 78, the Mexican National import program, will have on supply and demand for seasonal farm labor. One northern state, Wisconsin, included in the migrant stream, expected that competition in securing agricultural workers will increase in the so-called "demand states".

Since the time of this survey, three important legislative measures have been signed into federal law. Approved by Congress and the President during 1964, they are:

(1) Coverage for migratory labor and other seasonal farm workers in the President's anti-poverty program; the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 relating to education, child day care and sanitation. Under the poverty legislation, Public Law 88-452, the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity is to establish programs in these subjects.

(2) A new farm labor housing program included in the Housing Act of 1964, Public Law 88-560. Under a section of the Act, low rent housing for migrants and other domestic farm labor can be built with the assistance of Federal grants of up to two-thirds of the construction cost.

(3) Another law enacted, Public Law 88-582, requires crew leader registration with the Department of Labor after January 1, 1965. Included also, is a provision for fingerprinting of crew leaders.

Material presented in this study show the migrant worker situation in Southwest Oklahoma is changing. Increased mechanization in agriculture is rapidly reducing the need for their services. The migrant will of necessity have to change his methods of livelihood. Many of those who remain in the area will eventually be forced to seek nonfarm employment. The problems associated with this adjustment can only be solved by wholehearted effort of the entire community.

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TABLE I
1963 OKLAHOMA COTTON ACREAGE, YIELD AND PRODUCTION

Area	Acreage		Yield per Acre		Production
	Planted Acres	Harvested Acres	Planted Pounds	Harvested Pounds	Number of 500 lbs Gross Weight Bales
Southwest Area	259,000	244,100	258	273	139,300
Greer County	41,000	37,500	186	203	15,900
Harmon County	42,000	40,100	354	371	31,100
Jackson County	53,400	50,700	387	407	43,100
Kiowa County	52,400	48,600	158	170	17,200
Tillman County	70,200	67,200	219	228	32,000
State Total	620,000	590,000	259	273	336,000

Source: Oklahoma Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

TABLE II
SUMMARY OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS

		County				
Item	Total	Greer	Harmon	Jackson	Kiowa	Tillman
Population Represented	2,332	191	395	1,120	123	503
Respondents	376	35	70	176	16	79
In Families	2,309	186	387	1,112	123	501
Number Groups	353	30	62	168	16	77
Average Size	6.5	6.2	6.2	6.6	7.7	6.5
RESPONDENTS OR FAMILY HEADS						
Total	376	35	70	176	16	79
Male	334	32	65	155	13	69
Female	42	3	5	21	3	10
Marital Status						
Married	320	28	57	148	15	72
Single	20	5	6	8	0	1
Divorced	10	1	1	7	0	1
Widowed	8	0	1	4	0	3
Separated	18	1	5	9	1	2
Median School Years Completed	3.6	3.4	3.9	3.4	4.0	3.3
Linguistic Ability						
Spanish						
Speak	376	35	70	176	16	79
Read	184	15	43	85	9	32
Write	172	13	40	78	8	33
English						
Speak	344	34	60	158	16	76
Read	148	13	39	60	9	27
Write	138	12	35	55	8	28
No English						
Speak	32	1	10	18	0	3
Read	36	2	4	25	0	5
Write	34	1	5	23	0	5
HOUSING IN AREA						
Number Responded	347	33	68	170	14	62
Considered Adequate	270	26	45	131	12	56
Considered not Adequate	77	7	23	39	2	6
INTEREST IN SPECIAL TRAINING						
Number Responded	373	34	70	174	16	79
Expressed Interest	295	24	55	144	16	56
Not Interested	78	10	15	30	0	23

TABLE II (Continued)
SUMMARY OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRANTS

Item	Total	County Greer	Harmon	Jackson	Kiowa	Tillman
CHILD CARE ARRANGEMENTS						
Sent Them to School						
Number Responded	281	21	48	149	10	53
Yes	230	17	40	112	10	51
No	51	4	8	37	0	2
Took Them to Fields						
Number Responded	275	21	48	149	9	48
Yes	82	3	7	52	3	17
No	193	18	41	97	6	31
Left Them to Care for Themselves						
Number Responded	274	21	48	148	9	48
Yes	8	4	3	1	0	0
No	266	17	45	147	9	48
Had Difficulty Arranging Child Care for Younger Ones						
Number Responded	274	21	48	148	9	48
Yes	17	4	4	8	0	1
No	257	17	44	140	9	47

TABLE III
EXTENT OF MECHANIZATION BY COTTON GROWERS, 1953, 1958 and 1963 WITH ANTICIPATED CHANGES BY 1968

Cotton Growers	Year Reported For			Anticipated by 1968
	1963	1958	1953	
COTTON GROWERS, TOTAL	493	477	460	479
Used Machinery to Harvest - Total	416	303	149	425
Greer County	72	53	33	72
Harmon County	86	53	29	87
Jackson County	113	76	39	118
Kiowa County	62	55	34	63
Tillman County	83	66	14	85
95 to 100% Machine-harvest - Total	215	121	44	295
Greer County	30	21	8	43
Harmon County	46	21	7	67
Jackson County	37	7	1	62
Kiowa County	36	32	21	47
Tillman County	66	40	7	76
75 to 94% Machine-harvest - Total	57	47	12	64
Greer County	8	7	1	14
Harmon County	15	9	2	11
Jackson County	17	18	7	24
Kiowa County	9	4	0	9
Tillman County	8	9	2	6
45 to 74% Machine-harvest - Total	71	68	46	47
Greer County	24	19	14	13
Harmon County	14	11	9	7
Jackson County	20	16	12	20
Kiowa County	9	12	9	5
Tillman County	4	10	2	2
1 to 44% Machine-harvest - Total	73	67	47	19
Greer County	10	6	10	2
Harmon County	11	12	11	2
Jackson County	39	35	19	12
Kiowa County	8	7	4	2
Tillman County	5	7	3	1
No Machine-harvest - Total	77	174	311	54
Greer County	19	32	59	19
Harmon County	12	41	60	10
Jackson County	33	64	91	17
Kiowa County	9	16	34	8
Tillman County	4	21	67	0

TABLE IV
SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF GINNERS RELATING TO MIGRANT LABOR, 1963

Selected Characteristics by County	Ginner Response		
	Yes	No	INA 1/
Worked with migrant labor	47	6	0
Greer	5	2	0
Harmon	7	0	0
Jackson	15	2	0
Kiowa	8	1	0
Tillman	12	1	0
Directed crew leader or family head to available work	42	7	4
Greer	5	1	1
Harmon	5	2	0
Jackson	11	4	2
Kiowa	8	0	1
Tillman	13	0	0
Employed labor manager	7	36	10
Had on-farm or town housing	18	32	3
Greer	4	3	0
Harmon	5	2	0
Jackson	9	5	3
Kiowa	0	9	0
Tillman	0	13	0
Detail on 122 houses available, all counties			
Number rent free	15	0	3
Number available year-around	5	10	3
Number with utilities furnished	12	0	6
Number with utilities year-around	5	10	3
Had gin-type barracks available	25	28	0
Greer	5	2	0
Harmon	6	1	0
Jackson	12	5	0
Kiowa	2	7	0
Tillman	0	13	0
Detail on 25 gin barracks, all counties, 1,071 rooms			
Number rent free	23	0	2
Number available year-around	14	9	0
Number with utilities furnished	19	0	4
Number with utilities year-around	13	10	2

1/ Information not available

(Rev. 4-64)

CONFIDENTIAL MIGRATORY FARM WORKER QUESTIONNAIRE
OKLAHOMA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Page 1

Date:________________ Interviewer:________________________________ County:________________

English: Speak____ Read____ Write____ Spanish: Speak____ Read____ Write____

1. Name:____ SSA #________________
2. Currently residing at:____

   Normal place of residence:____ (Town and State)
3. Sex: Male______ Female______ 4. Date of Birth________________________
5. Marital Status: Married______ Single______ Divorced______ Widowed______ Separated________
6. Education: What is the highest grade in school you ever attended?________________
7. Is this your first time here? Yes___No___If this is not your first time in this area, when were you here last?

   ____
8. If now a permanent resident of this area, when did you come here to stay?________________

   Why?____
9. How did you learn about work in this area? Crew leader___Labor Contractor___Friend or relative___grower or farmer___

   State Employment Service____Newspaper____Radio____Previous experience____Other(Specify)________________
10. What type of work do you follow when you are in this area? Chop cotton____Pick or pull cotton____gin work____

    other (specify)____
11. How long do you expect to remain in this area?________________________________
12. Where do you expect to go from here?________________________________
13. Did you engage in harvesting or other farm work immediately before coming to Southwest Oklahoma? Yes___No___.

    If yes, where?____
14. What type of activity?____

    If no, were you unemployed______ or had a job in non-farm activity?________________
15. If you did NOT work in farm activity immediately before coming here, where did you reside or live?________

    ____

    Doing what?____
16. Where did you work last year (1963)? (Type of crops, location)________________________

    ____

    ____

    ____

    ____

    ____

FACSIMILE

17. *Please provide the following information concerning your family:*

NAME	RELATIONSHIP	AGE	HIGHEST SCHOOL GRADE ATTENDED	NUMBER OF WEEKS WORKED IN 1963	WOULD THEY BE INTERESTED IN SPECIALIZED TRAINING

FACSIMILE

18. *Would you consider taking special training ? Yes____No____, If Yes, list subject(s) of instruction or type(s) of trade.*______________________________

____

____

19. *How long (weeks) were you able to work last year (1963)?*______________________________

20. *Where and how long (weeks) did you work in 1962? (include type of work)*______________________________

____

21. *How much money did you and your family earn last year (1963)?*______________ *1962?*______________

22. *What type of work, where and how long (weeks) did you work in 1958?*______________________________

____

____

23. *What other work experience do you have? (List types of work not previously included)*______________________________

____

____

____

24. *If you have children with you, do you - (yes or no answer to one or more questions)*
   - a. *Send them to school? Yes____No____*
   - b. *Take them to fields with you? Yes____No____*
   - c. *Leave them to care for themselves? Yes____No____*
   - d. *Have difficulty in arranging child care for younger ones? Yes____No____*

25. *Do you consider housing in this area adequate? Yes____No____*

CONFIDENTIAL FARM OPERATOR QUESTIONNAIRE
A Study of Migrant Farm Workers in Southwestern Oklahoma

FACSIMILE

Date:________ Interviewer____________ County:________

1. Name____________________ Address____________________

2. Physical location of farm:____________________

3. Do you Own-Operate____Own____ Rent____or Manage____the farm?

4. Primary type of farm: Cotton____ Wheat____ Beef____ Dairy____ General________

Other (Specify)____________________

5. What year did you begin farming in this area?________

How many acres were included in 1963? Total______ Cropland______

How many acres did you farm 5 years ago (1958)? Total______ Cropland______

How many acres did you farm 10 years ago (1953)? Total______ Cropland______

6. Do you expect any significant change in crops raised or in acreage within the next few years? (Sugar beets, vegetables, return to grassland, different primary crop, etc?)

Yes____No____, Explain____________________

____

____

____

7. Acres irrigated: 1963_____1958_____1953_____, expect in 1968_____1973________

8. If cotton grower, to what extent did you use or expect to use mechanical pickers or strippers? (Indicate percentage of crop harvested by machinery.)

1963______1958______1953______1968______1973______

9. Use of seasonal farm labor. Do you hire migratory farm labor? Yes_____ No_____

What for? Cotton chopping___ Boll Pulling___ Year round hands___ misc. short time_____

10. How many (total) did you use during 1963______1958______1953______

Has there been any change in the length of their employment in recent years? Yes__No__

Explain:____________________

____

____

11. Do you use the same workers from year to year? Many____Few____None____

Are they mostly family groups___Individuals____

12. Where do these workers reside when working for you? Your farm___Gin Housing___Town____

Other___(Specify)____________________

13. In your opinion, have these workers created any social or economic type problems in your community? Yes___No____. (If yes, please explain)____________________

____

____

____

14. We understand some workers have apparently settled permanently in Southwestern Oklahoma. Do you hire these workers, or do you rely upon incoming migratory labor or transient labor?

____

15. Comments:____________________

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